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THE MIRAGE OF THE MANY

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THE MIRAGE OF THE MANY

BY

WILLIAM THOMAS WALSH

NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1910

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TO
MY PARENTS

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THE MIRAGE OF THE MANY

CHAPTER I

THE ALTAR OF IDEALS

"AND furthermore," added Faverall Markham, "you are scattering your talents to the four winds like so much chaff."

The steel manufacturer half-rose from his chair as he spoke, shoving the ash-tray angrily across the library table, where it stopped on the very edge.

"I am sorry my political opinions are so distasteful to you," answered Seebar; "I can remember when you seemed to find them highly amusing."

The tone was almost bitter.

"Yes, but there is a difference *now*. When a bear is a whelp it is a plaything—its antics are to be laughed at; when it is grown it is dangerous,

and no longer to be humored. And I tell you, young man"—the words were edged like a steel tool—"I wouldn't have humored you, even as a cub, had I not known your father."

"And Dorothy?"

"She thinks as I do."

"So that is why she hasn't answered my letters!"

"Very likely," said Markham uncompromisingly. "Remember, young man," he added, "you are not the only one who can change."

"It seems not," came the retort.

Suddenly the stern, set lines in Markham's face relaxed. He came half-way around the huge mahogany table. Instinctively the other rose to meet him.

"Mr. Seebar, Alfred, my boy," he said; "why can't you see the folly of all this? It means absolute ruin to every business man, and, ultimately, suffering for every misguided wretch that casts his ballot for your party; yes, and for every one else, too, for that matter. If the Socialists

win at the polls, what will be the outcome? Ruin and chaos. And you will find that those who are your most enthusiastic adherents now will be the first to curse you then. On the other hand, should the Socialists fail to carry the election, you are crushed—destined to an obscure life forever. Oh, but you were mad,—mad to make that fire-brand speech; madder still to accept that nomination of overseer for Chicago." The old manufacturer banged his clenched fist on the table. "But it isn't too late even now. Come, do the sane thing, the right thing, and withdraw your nomination. I can't bear to think the son of my old friend Seebar a leader of the rabble."

From above, the single, shaded lamp threw a disk of light upon the floor, and both were standing within its circle. Markham had placed his hand pleadingly on Seebar's arm. It was a strong face that Seebar looked into,—not the "reckless, passion-writ face of the Fourth Generation," to quote the Socialistic literature of the time, but the intelligent, aggressive countenance

of a man who had planned and executed big things. It was of a mold that gave the lie to the carelessly coined, carelessly spoken saying of the day, that luxury and ease had undermined the manhood of the rich.

And so Seebar, himself square-jawed, clean cut, as erect and vigorous, and as pleasing to look upon, as a sturdy young sapling, could not help but admit to himself, as he noted the breadth of forehead beneath the locks of gray, and the large, wide-set eyes. The men who controlled the nation's wealth were giants in their day too, even as their forefathers had been in the early days of the twentieth century.

Seebar had no intention of yielding, however, as he answered coolly and dispassionately:

"A rabble they may be, sir. The more reason why they need sincere leaders. We're going to place mankind on a higher level in this year of 1952. It's a mere matter of justice. That's what Socialism stands for. It's been a platitude for centuries that Capital is created by Labor and

therefore belongs to Labor. You reproached me a moment ago with changing my opinions. It is true, a couple of years ago I looked at these things in a merely speculative, not in a practical, light. Since then I have seen things differently —seen things as they really are, and now I know that, whatever may be my personal interest or feeling, it is only right that I hold the position I have taken."

"A bit of the demagogue right here in our library; eh, Alfred?"

The open sneer brought a flush to the young politician's cheek. He bit his lips in a vexed way as if suppressing an angry reply.

"I see you refuse to understand me," he said at last. "It's too late, anyway, to argue this question," he added resignedly. "But if I had known you would feel as strongly as this, I believe I should not have come here to-night. A little over a month ago, when I was here last, you scouted all possibility of the Socialists' carrying the election. That was before the Na-

tional Convention had been held at the Stadium. Now, with the election but two months away, you know what the moneyed men have been doing in La Salle Street. You know what they are doing there to-night. They are winding up their business affairs. Some of them are even now making their last shipments of gold out of the country, preparatory to following, themselves.

"Now I know, of course, what effect this campaign has had upon business. There is no bottom to prices. Farm-lands, city real estate, railroad stocks—all are selling for a song—and always in gold and silver. And I understand, Mr. Markham, you have been plunging, using all available cash to control certain industries, so that if the Individualists should weather the storm you would be, perhaps, the most powerful financier in the country. But the Individualists won't weather the storm. And at your age and with your beliefs, frankly, I think the new régime will be, for you, intolerable.

"I haven't seen you since the nomination,

partly because I haven't had time in this campaign, and for another reason also. But to-night I thought I must come here and urge you to consider your daughter's welfare as well as your own. If you can still secure enough ready money to support yourself abroad, don't throw it away in sheer wild-cat speculation, for that's what the buying of all securities now means." The young man broke off abruptly, but the older man was quick to answer.

"And after affiliating yourself with this band of thieves, this rabble of brigands, you have the audacity to come here and advise me what to do?"

"Yes," answered Seebar, "I have." His features had taken on an expression of resolution that unmistakably showed it was habitual. Quite plainly he was holding his temper in leash, for his eyes were flashing dangerously.

With anger and irritation in every stride, Mr. Markham began to pace up and down the room. Suddenly he stopped and touched a button on

the wall, flooding the room with light. Then he flung himself once more into the depths of his chair.

"Sit down," he commanded imperatively, pointing to Seebar's chair. He raised the lid of a box that stood on the table, and tendered the younger man a cigar. "We must come to an understanding on this miserable affair, if possible, though it takes all night," he said decisively.

"Thank you," said Seebar. The question of Dorothy was included in the father's phrase.

"Now," went on Mr. Markham, angrily blowing little palpitating whiffs of smoke between his words; "I'll concede every statement you've made regarding the political situation, and my own position, as well. A month ago I believed we *could* swing the election in spite of the fact that the Individualists—your party calls them Capitalists—were divided. Then, as you well know, the Republican and Democratic leaders, becoming alarmed, united on one man. That fact has shaken my confidence—shaken it beyond

repair. Like every one else, I have counted on the extraordinary solidarity of the country vote. Of course the population of the cities is greater than that of the rural districts,—has been greater in fact, since 1940—but then while nearly every farmer is an Anti-Socialist, the converse—that nearly every city dweller is an Anti-Individualist, is by no means the fact. With the rural vote supported by a portion of the city vote, I did think we could squeeze through, for it was generally conceded that the Democratic nominee would scarcely get enough votes to lessen materially the Republican plurality. Then came the alarm. The Individualists felt that they could not even spare these few votes. You doubtless know better than I do the details of how the leaders of the two parties got together and united their followers under the name of the Individualist party. Until then, I had confidence, and I plunged heavily, as you were informed, on that expectation. God only knows what is to become of my daughter when the 'Great Change,' as you

people are fond of calling it, really does come. And all of us realize that a grand crash is certainly coming. The Constitution has been repeatedly tampered with in the last two years—so that practically anything can be done from day to day in the way of legislation. We Individualists, as you well know, fought, and fought hard, the initiative and referendum, first as a State, then as a Federal, act. Now the Constitution is as flexible as a municipal ordinance. At this election in November, by popular vote you simultaneously alter the Constitution and elect your officers in accordance with the change.

"I have tied up every dollar I could lay hands on, so you see I could not leave the country even if I wished. I am telling you exactly how I'm situated, not because I think you can help me, but just to give you an idea of the mischief you have helped create."

Their eyes met, but Seebar did not flinch.

"You are a young man of most unusual ability," continued Mr. Markham; "you would

have made a mark in statesmanship had you not deserted your own party. In the election of 1948 the Socialists showed an alarming strength. Now in 1952, when they seem destined to sweep everything before them, many of the natural supporters of the present system, such as you, strengthen the opposition enormously by going over into their ranks as candidates for high political office. Why, if you could have put half the fire into a speech in support of Individualism that you put into that famous speech in the Convention, which brought you your nomination, thousands upon thousands of votes would now be saved to us. When men of talent, born into our class, our natural defenders, desert us, where are we to turn?"

He seemed for an instant to hesitate, then looked up sharply.

"Considering all these things, Alfred, I cannot see that you have any right, unless you are willing to withdraw your candidacy, to expect to marry into my family."

Mr. Markham paused; his abrupt conclusion was in the nature of a bomb, but the explosion was not unexpected.

"Why do you wish me thus to dishonor myself and my love for your daughter?" asked Seebar.

He was sitting upright, his strong hands grasping the arms of his chair till the veins swelled, his eyes flashing, his face surmounted by an angry flush. Suddenly his words came in a flood:

"You wouldn't have Dorothy marry a cur,—a whining, whimpering coward who had sold his honor just for her love, would you? You speak as if I could change principles and the enthusiasm for them just as easily as I might put on or off a suit of clothes. What sort of a man do you suppose I am, anyway?"

Both men again rose. Anger was blazing in Seebar's eyes, but Markham was cold.

"I wouldn't ask you to quit that mob of insane revolutionists," said the manufacturer, "if

I thought you were thoroughly in earnest. You may think you are, but you are not. You have taken up Socialism because its high-sounding philosophy appealed to you. If you hadn't made that incendiary speech in the Convention you would have cooled down by this time. I ask you to be reasonable; I ask you not to do that for which hereafter you will have the keenest regret, and you become red with rage. I do not ask that you even support the Individualists. But what I do ask is that you withdraw your candidacy. Such a course would show that you really do love my daughter, and, moreover, that you have some respect for my opinions and feelings."

"But, Mr. Markham, you are asking me to make a sacrifice that no man worthy of the name would make."

"In that event you know the alternative."

"Oh, father, is it so bad as that?"

In the door-way, the lights in the hall shining through the loose strands of her hair in a soft

golden glow, stood Dorothy Markham. One arm, the loose wide sleeve of which had slipped back, was raised above her head, and rested against the casing. She was dressed in some soft, reddish stuff that accentuated the lines of her figure. As she stood thus, unconscious of the free, graceful attitude she had assumed, her eyes were alive with a look of anxiety. As the two men turned toward her, she hurried across the room to her father, and threw her arms about his neck.

"Father, don't be so hard," she pleaded.

"Dorothy, child, what am I to do? Here is a man who is striking relentlessly at the whole social fabric. He desires to bring down everything in one grand crash. His party is crying out for the abolition of Capital, personal liberty, everything, in fact, that we prize as civilization. And worst of all he doesn't really believe in the accursed stuff himself. He took it up as a whim; he thinks he is sincere, but he is not. When a man acts of set purpose as a fanatic, do you

think for a moment I can make him welcome in this house?"

Seebar had stepped to the window and was looking out into the night. Over Lake Michigan a waning moon was tossing through rough clouds. A breeze was blowing from the east, and the waters of the lake could be heard booming against the break-water. Through the open window the summer air sifted, just pleasantly warm.

There was a battle going on in Seebar's soul, —a battle which he hardly dared to acknowledge to himself. Now for the first time did he begin to realize just how much his affiliation with the Socialist party was going to cost him. For social position he cared nothing; and he was likewise willing to forego all opportunities to acquire wealth. But when loyalty to his political principles meant, as he could plainly see now, the ultimate sacrifice of love, the terrible gulf that suddenly opened at his feet made him draw back aghast. He had not anticipated this. In the

past few months he had thrown himself into the game with the fiery zeal of an idealist. So engrossed had he been that for several weeks past he had seen nothing of his friends, the Markhams.

Now, on this night, a brief respite had come, and he had run out to Millionaires' Row along the Sheridan Drive. Then Mr. Markham's wrath had burst upon him for his active part in the campaign. The steel manufacturer had very plainly indicated how his course had all but destroyed not only his own, but his daughter's regard.

It was a terrible temptation, and while he wrestled with it, he found his struggle doubly hard, for suddenly he found Dorothy at his side, looking up at him with pleading eyes.

"I didn't suppose it was so serious," she said. "Alfred, won't you do this to please me?"

The eyes looked very large and blue and earnest, fringed with heavy dark lashes.

"It isn't as if you really believed in all this,

is it, dear?" she went on. "It's just your ambition—forgive me for saying so—but isn't it? If you really love me—you would—you would be willing to give up this—this Socialism, wouldn't you?"

She asked her question with almost the simple confidence of a child. She put it as if it would be a denial of his love to refuse. And as he looked into her eyes, he was looking beyond, into a future that was gloomy and sunless. If only she could realize what it all meant!

"You don't know what you are asking, child," he answered. "I would cut off my right hand if it would avail you anything, but I can't do this thing: I simply can't betray myself."

"Not for me?" she whispered softly.

The expression in his eyes became a look of positive anguish.

Dorothy turned to her father.

"Perhaps——" she began, hesitatingly.

Comprehendingly he moved toward the door. On the threshold he paused, and seemed about

to say something more; then, apparently reconsidering, he slowly passed out into the hall.

"Alfred," said Dorothy, placing a small hand on each of his broad shoulders, "do you remember that night in the springtime, out there under the trees, when you said you loved me?"

Her eyes were looking straight up into his,—serious and earnest and girlish.

"Yes," he answered very low. The tension of features had relaxed, but the habitual firmness of the mouth was still there.

"Well, why have you changed? What have I done to make you regret that night?"

"Dorothy! I haven't changed! Why do you say that?"

"Because," she replied, with a touch of the didactic, "a man, if he really loves a woman, does what she asks of him without question. You said a moment ago that you could not betray yourself. That's just a phrase—out of a book. If you really love me you will sacrifice anything, everything for me. I would for you.

But I'm not asking you to betray yourself. It's neither duty nor honor that binds you to these Socialists. It's vanity. You don't recognize it as such, but it is. It isn't because the Socialists are going to make us poor that I want you to give this up, but because I want to feel that you love me. Don't you, can't you see?"

He was silent.

"Why don't you answer?"

"I can't say that I do see, dear," he replied at last with slow reluctance.

Her hand slipped from his shoulder.

"It wasn't always so hard for you to understand."

She paused as if awaiting an answer. As none came she continued, speaking almost as if to herself: "Then perhaps it *is* best to do as father says."

She took a step toward the door. Seebar wheeled about, his face as white as paper.

"Don't, don't go," he implored, his voice trembling, "give me a moment, only a moment."

It was very quiet there in the library. Somewhere about the house a door closed with a far-away distant sound; the clock ticked in slow, methodical rhythm; a stray gust of the lake breeze whistled low, as it was sucked into a corner of the building, then whisked against the screen in the window, with a soft, brushing sound, and finally sighed itself into nothingness in the distance.

Seebar broke the silence by blurting out, "If you had ambitions, too, Dorothy, you would understand."

"Ambitions! If I—had ambitions! Alfred, I am not a child. My years of art study were not a pastime,—my professional work was not exactly the fad of a rich man's daughter. A woman's ambitions are mostly toys, I know, to be thrown away at marriage. But yes, I, too, would have thrown them away gladly for the love of a man—a man such as I thought you to be, Alfred."

Her voice caught.

Seebar tossed his arms in a despairing gesture. "Don't mind my words, Dorothy, I scarcely know what I am saying. You should know that I would not hurt you intentionally for worlds."

He put his hands on her shoulders and attempted to draw her toward him. She was sobbing now.

"No, no!" she exclaimed, pushing him away.

"Dorothy, dear, won't you please listen?"

"Not to-night, not to-night, please, please don't. Perhaps to-morrow, perhaps next week, but not now, oh, not now!"

Faverall Markham re-entered the room presently. He found Dorothy seated on the sofa, with averted face, while Seebar was standing at the window, looking out into the gloom.

The young man turned and held out his hand to Markham. "I—I think I'll bid you good-night," he said.

CHAPTER II

A CITY OF LIGHT

IT was the third day of November—election day. Seebar had taken a hurried supper at a nearby café and then had quickly returned to his offices in the Chamber of Trade Building. There was little time for such mere trifles as bodily nourishment; the returns of the election were coming in.

Those several weeks following the night of his call at the Markhams' had been a period of fatiguing labor. His voice had been in every deliberative council, his determination, his energy, his enthusiasm had been felt in the arrangement of the many details of the campaign. Speeches, too, he had made by the score, and he was regarded as a tower of strength by people and party leaders alike.

Only a few months back an obscure lawyer, his

brilliant, passionate speech in the Socialist National Convention had carried the delegates off their feet. They had instantly recognized in him a man for their purpose—a man young, fiery, magnetic, filled with the enthusiasm of high ideals, steeped in the principles of Socialism, able to present those principles with convincing, compelling force. Moreover, he was a fighter, bold and dauntless; no wonder he was regarded as a priceless acquisition to the cause.

Never in all these weeks had his faith wavered, no, not for a single instant. His way had been as clear and certain, as sure, as a white, hard road gleaming in sunlight.

Up to the present, strangely enough, the breaking off of his relations with Dorothy Markham had been scarcely felt by him, after the first keen pain of that night. His interests had been too single, too concentrated in the cause he championed. His minutes, his very seconds had been too fully occupied for him to have leisure at his disposal to reflect upon and realize in any

degree the consequences of his estrangement from her.

Besides, he had hopes in abundance,—rich, roseate hopes. The dawn, the magnificent dawn, such as never yet had been seen by man, but only dreamed of, was at hand. With the inauguration of the new conditions, he felt that the men of Markham's stamp, after the first anger and despair had passed, would be inevitably reconciled. And as for Dorothy, he felt that with the readjustment of society, gradually her love for him would return. He had been sure of that.

He picked up a letter from his desk. It had remained unopened since the afternoon mail. He knew from the postmark that it was from his uncle, Richard Tompkins, who lived on a small farm some thirty miles beyond the city's limits.

MY DEAR ALFRED:—

I have not concerned myself as much about this Socialism as perhaps I should have done, but it has indeed given me a feeling of pride that you should have been chosen as one of the big leaders.

It never occurred to me, however, till quite

recently what might be the result should your party be victorious. All my neighbors declare that things will not be well for us farmers. They say that there will be a new apportionment of land; that my little farm will become still smaller, or else that it will be absorbed with others and managed on the basis of the great corporate system of commerce and manufacturing. In either event, the result does not appear promising, for will not the new arrangement seriously interfere with my income, small as it is now?

I am, as you know, in my sixty-fifth year; I have taken little interest for some time in politics, being a quiet and domestic sort of man. These things coming at my time of life worry me a bit. However, I trust that all will be well. But you know that the population of the cities, at least I am told so, can outvote that of the country, and perhaps the interests here in the country differ from those of you people in the cities.

I am writing this not to trouble you, but to relieve my own conscience. Much as I hate to do it for your sake, I feel that I shall be compelled to vote the way my neighbors will to-morrow, that is, of course, for the Individualists.

Now, forgive me for the timid fears of an old man. I feel that I must do my duty by my neighbors, but still wish that you may win.

I hope that you may be able to visit us for a few hours, at least, after the election.

Well, good-by, now, my boy. With best wishes and luck,

Your loving Uncle,

RICHARD TOMPKINS.

PARKHURST, ILL., *Nov. 2nd.* 1952.

Martha sends her love. She also tells me to say that she will send some more of her mince pies soon, the kind you used to like so well.

A pang of regret, almost of accusation, gripped Seebar for the moment. Good, kind old Uncle Dick! He had been a father, more than a father to him. He had been father and uncle and friend, all in one. In days gone by Uncle Dick had money—not a great deal, still a surplus over and above his wants. It was due to him solely that Seebar had been able to go through college. Seebar's memory went back to that night his father had come home from the stock exchange, a broken man,—the fortune of a life-time's labor gone almost in a flash.

Brain fever had followed, and in his delirium the poor harried financier had fought over again

the terrible agonizing last few days he had gone through before the actual crash came. And he had raved, too, about Alfred's mother, dead then some years.

When the end came, Uncle Dick was at the boy's side to comfort him. Yes, when he thought it all over, Uncle Dick had done a vast deal for him.

What if—and the thin wedge of doubt found its opening—what if the great Socialist program should not work out successfully, and he should thus have helped to bring nothing but ruin as a reward for all his uncle's kindness?

Somehow, this apparently slight incident of the letter singularly disturbed him. Perhaps it was the reaction after days and weeks of nervous strenuousness and excitement, or perhaps it was that the real import of the Great Change to a multitude of people was for the first time really driven home to him.

When worried or perplexed, Seebar was wont to ascend to the tower of the building, ninety-

three stories above the street, and lean upon the railing of the circular balcony, with the air beating about his head, clarifying his thoughts. To-night he went up to this tower.

Chicago, the hugest city in the world, stretched, a vast blur of light, to an incredibly distant horizon—north, west, south—a red encompassing halo, extending to the farthest reaches of vision. Lights! lights! lights! Where did they begin? Where did they cease? They were flung out into space, seemingly interminably, like one all-embracing milky way. Even where Seebar stood, a wan radiance, more illuminating than the star-light, was diffused. The calm lights of the sky paled in comparison with the elusive but insistent glow that pressed upward from the earth.

As his glance fell straight downward, Seebar saw, far, far below, bands of white and green lights, in segments, pass in rapid succession. These he knew to be the trains of the mono-railway, running on an elevated structure high

above the level of the streets. As he watched, train after train swung round a double curve, the red and green lights of each, for the twinkling of an eye, pricking out a great letter S, which, even as it formed, dissolved as the train cleared the curve.

Overhead, occasionally, a freight-laden air-ship, distinguishable by its gleaming yellow side-lamps, passed swiftly, its searchlight cutting a path ahead through the darkness; sometimes throwing an oblique shaft downward upon the city.

Westward, three squares away, rose a row of needle-like structures, every window of each a rectangle of light. As he shifted his eyes to a similar row to the south, the buildings, a mass of multiplied lights, seemed, with the turning of the head, to rush skyward. To the east, over a vast wall of sky-scrapers, a reddish glow lay, gradually dissolving into the whiter light around. These were the lights along the Lake Front and Michigan Avenue,—the latter the great theatre

and restaurant district of Chicago. Far out, over the waters of Lake Michigan hung this glow; then still farther away, beyond, lay that blackest of black walls,—always, even on the fairest of nights, suggestive of a vast bank of storm-bearing mist, just emerging above the horizon, where sky and water met,—the one really dark space in the vast reaches of sky and city and water.

Nightly the lights came on in myriads of vast winks, as the various circuits were brought into play, and merged into one irresistible torrent of illumination. In some sections of the metropolis shades had to be drawn as tightly as if the sun were in the zenith. Light was omnipresent, and the ways of nature were beginning gradually to change. Night work, where it did not involve sales directly to people, was becoming more and more prevalent. Some business men divided the day into periods, working a brief time in the morning, taking recreation in the afternoon, and returning to their offices again at night.

Light seemed to be the emblem, the symbol, of man's conquest over nature. His architectural structures were formed in outline of it by night; his conquest of speed was indicated by light,—green and red,—on the swiftly hurrying mono-railways, bearing their multitudes hither and thither at the easy speed of one hundred and twenty miles an hour, and overhead, like a string of floating stars, they indicated the traffic through the air. In his service man now utilized light, as he had never done before. Light had shifted his point of view. He had come to interpret life in terms of light and darkness. His vocabulary showed it, just as his eye, his brain, were influenced by it.

Man in this environment was not quite himself. That strangely penetrating power of light, forcing itself upon him constantly, obsessed him. And in spite of his wonderful, almost startling, conquest over darkness, in one respect he was reverting to the primeval—that was in his dread of darkness. Darkness was uncomfortable to

the man of the city. Light to him meant security, safety. He almost abhorred darkness. He crept from it as a child does from a shadow.

Hence it was that Seebar was always filled with a strange, compelling awe whenever he stood thus in space, with the winds wrangling about him, in this high twilight, as it were, of the city's glare. Here were silence and isolation. Here, alone in the night, unhampered by the differences and disputes of men, remote from the pressure of their prejudices and their passions, able to think as an individual and not as the community thinks, doubt sorely beset him, as it never had before.

Was it wise, after all, thus to overthrow the wonderful structure that Capital had upreared? The nation had a population of over two hundred millions. The Mississippi Valley was the centre of commerce, manufacturing, and agriculture. Great canals criss-crossed the country, bearing vast fleets of ocean-going vessels bound for the ports of the world. The Mississippi River was

the outlet for all this commerce, and New Orleans, as a consequence, was the third largest city on the continent, New York ranking second. Strange and wonderful, almost as strange and wonderful as the original peopling of the country, had been the manner in which the centre of life of the nation had been shifted to the Mississippi Valley between the Allegheny Mountains on the one hand, and the Rocky Mountains on the other.

It was indeed a rich, wonderful civilization, a materialistic civilization, perhaps, but no less wonderful for that, which, centring in Chicago, had been built up in the Middle West,—this city of Chicago, like the great cities of former civilizations, like Memphis, Nineveh, and Babylon, situated on inland water ways, in the heart of a fertile valley.

The interior ship canal, connecting Chicago with the Gulf of Mexico, had converted the metropolis into a sea-port. She shared in the trade with South America, Mexico, and the West

Indies. The Panama Canal had brought her nearer to the Pacific Coast, to the wheat fields and mines of the Northwest, to Alaska and eastern Siberia, to Japan and China. In the year 1952 the population of the Mississippi Valley was a hundred millions.

But notwithstanding that this was the most wonderful civilization that had ever been upreared, in spite of the fact that the people had never before been so prosperous, the old slogan of half a century earlier was in constant repetition, "The rich are growing richer and the poor poorer." Man's discontent was a paradox. He was discontented because he had so little reason to be. His wants were over-satisfied, over-satisfied, at least, in proportion to his merits. Not a single being suffered from lack of food, or clothing, or shelter—the primary human wants,—no, nor from a thousand accessories to these wants.

Man was spoiled by economic ease,—and yet, notwithstanding this, he craved for the still easier life. A great reaction was bound to come.

Inconsistently man hit at the keystone of his prosperity—his economic system, and Socialism, a theoretic principle for many a decade back, was demanded. Thought had revolutionized the world, in science at least. Thought could likewise revolutionize the social system. Such was the fundamental argument of the Socialistic leaders of the day.

But to the reasons for this discontent Seebar was as blind as his contemporaries. He could see nothing but the benefits that he felt must come with a change in the economic system. Still, as his eye ranged over the vast area of city, he could not escape the fact that Capital, as it had been organized in the last half-century, had accomplished the truly wonderful. His thoughts ran to the accounts he had read of the city as it had appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century. It must have been a peculiar city then, he reflected,—a vast, rambling, loose-strung place, full of dust and noise and dirt; a smoky pall hanging over it by day and by night, through

whose smudgy atmosphere the buildings, discolored, unsightly, loomed in squatty masses. They designated their twenty- and thirty-story structures "sky-scrapers" in all seriousness. Smoke was everywhere. It discolored the mucous membrane of throat and lungs. Medical colleges were fond of displaying side by side, preserved in alcohol, the pink "normal" lungs of the countryman with those of the resident in Chicago. In post-mortem examinations the dissector's knife was said to grit upon minute particles of carbon as it cut through the tissue of the lungs.

The city, two hundred square miles of it, with 2,000,000 inhabitants, was as if it had been spilled out over the prairie. In many respects it trailed in the wake of Eastern cities. In some things it led. It was then, as to-day, the biggest railroad centre in the world. It was a vast grain market; it was in the vicinity of the iron mines. In much the same manner, though not, of course, in the same degree, as later, the city was the

centre of the Nation's trade and commerce. But after all, it was more like a huge village than a city.

Seebar laughed softly to himself at the picture. "A rum sort of place it must have been," he mused. Capitalism had indeed since built up a great materialistic civilization on that crude basis, but could not Socialism do still better?

As the lake breeze blowing about his head began to cool his blood and clear his brain, Seebar's doubts vanished. Once more he felt absolute confidence in himself and in his purpose.

He took a final look at the far-flung lights.

Well, what of them? What if Capitalism had created this city of cities, this miracle of light? Socialism would create a greater city, or if not a greater, a less materialistic, and, certainly, a much happier one!

CHAPTER III

WHAT HAPPENED ELECTION NIGHT

WHEN Seebar at last descended to his office, he found three men awaiting him. They were Henry Bornheim and Edgar Jeppels,—both candidates for office on the Socialistic ticket,—and Harry Thornton, managing editor of the *Daily Globe*.

They had been receiving reports of the general election by telephone, and as Seebar learned by a question or two, these reports so far had merely confirmed the expected—that the cities were going heavily Socialistic and the rural districts almost solidly Individualistic. Since the old system of balloting for presidential electors had been displaced by direct vote for the candidates themselves, returns by states had largely lost their significance.

"You've got a cold hand to-night, Seebar,"

said Bornheim. "I bet ten to one you've been mooning up in that tower. Your crow's nest seems to chill your blood."

"Yes," answered Seebar, slightly smiling; though his dark eyes were a trifle sterner than his lips.

Indeed his greeting of Bornheim had not been more than polite, for despite the latter's outward polish there was something about the man he had always instinctively disliked.

"Oh, he's got a warm enough hand for his friends, I guess," put in Thornton bluntly. "Seebar's an orator, not a politician."

"No, not a practical politician," retorted Bornheim.

"What's a practical politician?" asked Seebar with mild insolence.

"Oh, come now, Seebar," broke in Jeppels, the active ward heeler. "You big fellows make a devil of a bluff at being 'clean-handed,' and all that sort of rot; but all you do is talk a lot of bunk about 'civic virtue,' and let us little guys

do the dirty work. If it ain't done though, how you howl!"

"I've never condoned dirty work," replied Seebar with a show of warmth, "and I've put a stop to it wherever I could. No one knows that better than you, Jeppels," he added significantly.

"Oh, indeed," laughed Bornheim, tugging at his short black mustache. "We're quite too moral to condescend to mingle with the rabble, are we? Just direct their puny efforts at a distance like a god, eh?"

Jeppels' dull gray eyes were beginning to gleam in his flabby, wrinkled face. "Damn you fellows," he exclaimed, doubling up a heavy, hair-covered hand; "we drive the voters into line. We browbeat and lie and coax, and then you big guys have the nerve to take what we slip you, and spit on us besides. You talk about the Capitalists. By God, you're all alike; just as bad!"

"Oh, come, gentlemen, we don't want to quarrel," said Seebar good-naturedly. "This election must be getting on our nerves."

"All right, old man," Bornheim replied, slapping Seebar on the back. "We'll all be so kind-hearted when we're in power that there'll be no more quarreling, eh? Society is going to be deliciously topsy-turvy. We're going to upset everything, from the church to the home. We'll live on the fat of the land, and our morality will be as healthful, as primitive, as unaffected, as Adam's and Eve's in the Garden of Eden. I'm sorry that we weren't able to get that free love plank in the platform."

Free love! In spite of his expressed desire for harmony, Seebar could not quite conceal his grimace of disgust. That was one of the tenets of a wing of the party. In fact, as Seebar was obliged to admit to himself, there was a curious union of many diverse elements in the Socialist party that were not brought into the ranks by conversion to its economic principles.

Jeppels noticed the slight look of disgust. "Ha-ha-ha!" he laughed. "Seebar, you're a good one. You're not in this game for what

there's in it. Damn it, if I don't half-believe you're working for the public good."

"Yes," answered Seebar with assumed ease, "I believe I am."

At that moment he hardly knew which he detested the more, the smiling Jeppels, with his face frankly coarse and voluptuous, or Bornheim, with his cool, polished air, regarding with amused contempt, scarcely veiled, the outburst of the ward heeler.

For relief Seebar turned to Thornton. "So you're really going to issue to-morrow, as usual?"

Thornton nodded in his grave fashion. "We're going to stand back of our statement that, regardless of the results of the election, we shall print the returns. Of course, if the Socialists win, to-morrow will be the last time we go to press. The paper passes, as does everything else, into the hands of the government. And I feel that the Socialists are going to win. Yes, boys, I believe it's good-by, old *Globe!* After to-

morrow there will be but one paper issued in Chicago, and that will be a government sheet." There was just the hint of a tremor in his voice. "But we're going to give the ungrateful public the news right up to the last minute. We take a pride in doing so. You may ask, why should we stick to the helm after our ship is confiscated by the state? It may appear theatrical in the eyes of some, but we don't look at it that way. I tell you, gentlemen," and Thornton's blue eyes flashed in their earnestness, "we feel that the newspaper is a public institution, and that we owe it to the public to serve it up to the last possible moment of our usefulness. The newspaper is a servant of the public. It must look out for the public's interests first, its own second. When you win, and every one sees the fact fairly and squarely stated in the Capitalistic press, then the Nation will at once know just where it stands—just what it has done. There is nothing to be gained by questioning the returns. If we must have a new régime, let it

come in as peaceably as possible. Henceforth, the newspapers will be owned by the government. They will have an identical policy. That may be a good thing, or it may prove to be a bad thing. But I believe it will be recognized that the newspapers under private ownership were more faithful to the public interests than they are generally credited with being to-day."

"Idealists, idealists, every one," protested Bornheim, his smooth cheeks wreathed in smiles. "This sort of talk of yours and Seebar's makes me uncertain as to the reality of things. If it wasn't for Jeppels with his practical point of view, I'd begin to feel a bit nervous," he added, in an attempt at facetiousness.

"Well," retorted Thornton, "it's idealists that are making this election possible for you Socialists."

"Why, to be sure, that adds a sort of spice to the thing——" began Bornheim, but the telephone rang at that moment, and he stopped to answer it.

As he listened, a smile again came to his face. "A lot of the country districts in the South are actually going our way," he explained; "why, we've got this election in a walk-away. We're going to sweep——" Suddenly a frown displaced the smile.

"Humph," he commented, a moment later, snapping up the receiver, "where do you suppose the Capitalistic votes are cropping out at?—in Boston and Philadelphia."

"Boston and Philadelphia!" repeated Thornton.

"How's it running?" asked Seebar.

"Well, their man Trumbull is giving Furst something to think about, I guess. There's about three hundred thousand Capitalist votes cast in those two cities."

"There must be some mistake, surely," exclaimed Seebar excitedly. "Why, man, we're counting on the East to balance up with the Rocky Mountain section! We were certain Furst would practically get all the votes in Phila-

delphia, and Boston, too. What do you think, Thornton? You were in on the straw vote taken last month."

Thornton shook his head. "I don't understand it, at all," he replied. "Our canvass for the *Globe* showed mighty few votes in those cities for Trumbull."

"The Capitalists have been buying 'em up, I bet ten to one," suggested Jeppels.

"Shut up, Jeppels," snapped Bornheim irritably, much as he would speak to an annoying child. His face had suddenly taken on a set, anxious look. No wonder his usually complacent manner and calm nerve were giving way before the uncertainty of it all. When the polls had opened that morning, he, with millions of other Socialists, had been so confident of success. He had felt power and the spoils of office already in his grasp. He was unprepared for this seeming change in the tide. Worst of all, defeat spelled not only political ruin, but even ignominy. There were a thousand and one indirect ways the

Capitalists would find to punish those who had frightened them so badly.

Seebar's first thought was for the multitudes who had pinned their hopes of the future, some of them their very destiny, on that day's balloting. His second thought was for himself, but not with reference to his own ambitions. The success or failure of his party in the election, he felt, was inevitably linked with his own personal happiness. A Capitalistic victory would utterly discredit him. He could not conceive the proud Faverall Markham yielding to his wishes after such a result.

The silence was broken by Jeppels' exclaiming, "What's that?"

A flash of light had burst through the great plate glass windows of the office, filling every nook and corner with white, overpowering glare. For an instant the intensity of the rays blinded them.

Then while they stood, staring and wondering, again came that terrific flash, which, though

the room was already brilliantly lighted, seemed fairly to stab their sight, as with a sharp pointed dagger.

As the glare, cut off as instantaneously as it had shot through space, piercing and merging into itself all other lights, disappeared, the four men there in the room raised their dazzled eyes to a square tower, pricked out by a mass of illuminated windows, three blocks to the eastward. It overtopped by perhaps one hundred feet the sixty- and seventy-story sky-piercers that stood,—huge, formidable walls,—on the opposite side of the broad thoroughfare.

Hanging about the head of the tower, a soft glow, like a nimbus, appeared. Then once more the great flood of light poured upon them, beating down their vision in a constant succession of waves, as the rays were rapidly turned off and on.

Below, in the broad streets, could be heard, through the closed windows, a sudden upburst of voices, and a muffled roar, like the beating of a

tempest through a screen of trees,—the beating roar of a multitude of feet.

"It's the final returns from Washington," said Bornheim, new hope lighting up his face. The noise in the street had died away. Even the throbbing of feet was stilled. The glare was gone. With bewildered eyes they found their way to the window, and raising the sash, looked down into the street.

So far as they could see, from wall to wall the mob was packed, silent, expectant. The faces were partly upturned, strangely pale, oval things under the white lights of the city—set off by the darkness of hair and hats and garments—foreshortened, they paved the street, blurring off in the distance in a pallid mass.

These faces were all turned toward a vast illuminated space on the front of a wedge-shaped building, which, visible up the whole length of the thoroughfare, stood where the street branched out like the arms of the letter Y, the building standing in the cleft.

Flashed the words: "Furst making slight gains in Pennsylvania and New York country regions. Boston Individualistic vote surprisingly heavy."

And then the words were gone, and only the eye of white light lay upon the wall.

"I can't stand this," said Seebar, turning to the others. "This way of awaiting our fate and the Nation's is too cold-blooded. Let's get down there where life is circulating and be a part of the electorate."

Still half-blinded they found their way to the elevator.

In the street it was chill and damp—a raw blast now and then sweeping in from the lake to the eastward, which the broad thoroughfares seemed fairly to suck in. At every gust, the crowd shrank closer into itself, each man with coat collar turned up, his hands down deep in pockets. Chicago, the wonder city of the twentieth century, had conquered darkness and solved the problem of rapid transit, but the pene-

trating, chilling lake breezes were beyond the control of the metropolis.

As they pressed into the fringe of the throng, they heard a man directly behind them remark to his companion, "Those rich bugs are having a hell of a time over in La Salle Street. They know the election's gone dead against them. You ought to see them scramble to get that gold under shipment. I wouldn't be surprised if the crowd stops 'em before the night's over."

"Why," said the other, "I thought they shipped it all long ago."

"Well, it seems they haven't. I guess they've been holding it for business deals should they pull through, but a sort of a panic seems to have got 'em now."

Seebar turned to the speaker. "Under the vote we've taken to-day," he said, "all citizens have two months in which to remove their portable property, if they want to."

"I know it, but you bet we're not going to let 'em fool us like that," chuckled the man. "No,

sir, not much! We're going to give these damned Capitalists a taste of their own medicine. That money belongs to the people, that's where it belongs."

Bornheim smiled, in his provokingly knowing way, and his smile seemed to say, "See what a fine beast you have evoked. With me all is a matter of mere policy, but with you——"

"They're not all like that." Seebar was quick in his defense of the people. "Besides, they'll learn," he added.

Bornheim did not answer. His eyes were once more upon the wall of the wedge-shaped building where the letters were again flashing.

F-U-R-S-T E-L-E-C-T-E-D S-O-C-I-A-L-I-S-T-S S-W-E-E-P C-O-U-N-T-R-Y B-Y E-S-T-I-M-A-T-E-D P-L-U-R-A-L-I-T-Y O-F 5-0-0-0-0-0-0.

The thing had happened, and the crowd was silent. It seemed stupefied by what it had done. At a stroke the régime of centuries had been cast aside—a new order of things was to come in

with the morrow, for by their vote a Constitutional change had also been made that day, abolishing all property in the instruments of production. As Seebar had said, two months' time was to be given the Capitalists to turn their property over to the state, but on the other hand the new government which stepped into power on the morrow was pledged to encourage a change before that time, wherever possible. There was to be no buying out of property by the state. The people, by their vote, had confiscated all property—outside of a certain quantity of personal effects—to the use of the state.

In spite of the vigorous, indeed vehement, manner in which the issues of the campaign had been waged, and in spite of the fact that the people were most keenly alive to these issues, now that their wishes had been realized, they seemed stunned, dazed, and they began to stare at each other in a strange, half-interrogatory, half-accusing way, as if afraid of what they had done.

And yet the millions in the huge city, stifled by the vast civilization they had reared about them, had gasped for liberty—freedom, as they thought—from the tyranny of labor. The clerk behind the counter, the mechanic at his bench, even the general superintendent in his office, chafed at the chains of restraint every high civilization must inevitably forge for itself. The pleasures and luxuries of the rich were at the door of the wage-earner. Poverty, to him who cared to work, was unknown, and work was to be had for the asking. The spiritual side of life had been largely lost. The ends of existence were measured in terms of quantity and magnitude. Men were constantly seeking escape from the discontent that was destroying them,—seeking it in worldly goods and in worldly pleasures, and craving always for more of them. In their hearts they hated the wealthy classes, the conservators and directors of the Nation's resources, who shut them off from what they regarded as their just share.

Seebar, too, had felt the same revulsion of feeling that had swept over the crowd. Now, as his eyes continued to range over the faces, again he read a great reaction.

In the many days of whirlwind speech-making, he had seen just such crowds, but on the faces of its members there had never appeared quite the look of rapt, wondering delight that he read now on the multitude of faces tilted skyward. He caught for an instant the crowd's vision of what neither they nor he understood—a great broad highway, of which, contrary to the laws of perspective, they formed the vanishing point, and as they looked down this road it ever widened out like a huge angle, only disappearing finally beyond a wonderfully brilliant horizon. This was the magnificent highway down which Socialism was now to march unimpeded.

But there was something, also, on their faces that Seebar did not quite like. It reminded him of the faces of a winning crowd at a horse race.

As in such moods action of some sort must

follow, there was not lacking the voice to give it impulse.

He was only a bit of a lad that fired the train that night—perhaps thirteen years old, with a head of red hair dimmed in the white light. Bright-eyed, thin-faced, he was standing on the broad ledge of a pillar that helped to support the overhanging arch at the doorway of a huge department store building. Seebar all at once had noticed him, a conspicuous, if miniature, live thing in a red sweater, a noticeable contrast with the inert massiveness and colorlessness of the pillar.

He seemed greatly excited, for his eyes were round and big and shining, almost weirdly so in so pale a face, and his feet beat restlessly.

As Seebar looked at him the boy leaned forward, almost to the point of falling, and from his elevation ten feet above their heads he cried down upon the crowd, his voice shrill and sharp.

Seebar could not understand the words, for at that instant a spontaneous "hurrah," the shout

of victory and relief, was already beginning to rise.

Still the roar of voices could not quite drown the boy's thin cry. Its sharpness pierced the greater, heavier sound. Men close by began to laugh and point at the excited little figure, now growing red in the face and gesticulating.

Then all at once in a partial lull his voice piped through the din in a high-pitched cry that could not be disregarded, "Le's go'n josh the millionaires over in La Salle."

A great burst of laughter went up,—laughter that was contagious, drowning utterly the heavy booming cheers in the distance. Those who had not caught the words laughed too. Then the cheering recommenced, still mingled with the laughter, and all about Seebar the crowd was pressing in closer, forcing him slowly, almost imperceptibly back, inch by inch, as it tried to wedge in still nearer to the boy.

He found himself with Jeppels, against the base of the pillar, two or three steps up the flight.

They could look out over the crowd,—a field of hands, shaking high in air, and of nodding heads, curious to look upon.

"The kid wants sport; well, I'll give him some," Jeppels bellowed in Seebar's ear.

As he spoke, he caught at the boy's legs, almost like an animal snatching at its prey. Seebar saw the boy totter and his feet give way beneath him, and then he shot head-first, in a regular dive, down upon the heads of the crowd. He was seized by a score of hands and whirled and cast about, a red-coated, squirming thing, in a human whirlpool.

Suddenly this game stopped. As hands caught at the boy and arms tossed him, a broad-shouldered man, towering above his fellows by nearly a head, reached out for the living plaything, and held it above his head, free from the crowd.

"Now," he thundered, "let the lad alone and we'll go over and 'josh the millionaires,' as he says." And he began to push forward.

Another cheer went up. The spirit of his suggestion seemed to radiate through the crowd. A zigzag path began slowly to open up to let pass man and boy. Those who had pressed aside fell in again. Presently this little trickling stream had started other little trickling streams. Bit by bit the crowd melted, till from wall to wall the faces flowed past Seebar, through the chasm-like street, in a torrent.

Stepping from the stairs of the building to the sidewalk, he felt himself drawn into this torrent like a bit of buoyant wood. Far ahead he could see the read sweater bobbing up and down like a strangely frail craft. He could begin to grasp the humor of the situation now, though at first he had felt nothing but indignation toward Jeppels at his treatment of the boy. Jeppels, sprawling against the pillar after his sweeping stroke, and cursing to himself; the surprised and startled look on the upturned faces as the youngster came tumbling down; the wild catching and tossing, and the whirlpool of heads and

hands,—the thought of these things brought an amused smile to Seebar's lips.

What was their purpose or why they went no one seemed to know, or even to consider. Of Bornheim and Thornton, Seebar had lost track some time before, and now Jeppels was gone, too.

After all the anxieties and worries of the many weeks past, Seebar found it pleasurable to abandon himself to the unconscious, non-personal whim of the mob, which seemed as care-free as a crowd of college boys out for a lark. He felt that there was excitement, and adventure, too, in going with the crowd.

Now and again as they marched, a long reverberating cheer would break forth, starting perhaps at the head of the column and rolling back down the line.

Westward they continued, pouring into the mouths of the streets that opened like vast gorges, till at last the torrent rushed, with the laughing boy on its breast, into La Salle Street, the financial centre of the Nation.

In the early days of the century La Salle Street had been a dark, narrow, canyon-like place, dirty and rough-paved, with dingy, smoke-blackened buildings of stone. At that time the Board of Trade Building divided the street into two sections. Where the thoroughfare began again to the south, still narrower, was a region of squalid tenement houses, printing establishments, and railroad freight depots. The clean, broad, white, well-lighted roadway cutting right through, was the dream then of only a few who could see into the future more clearly than could their fellows.

As it debouched into the broad thoroughfare, Seebar felt as if the mob were spreading out into a lake, pent up as it had been between the walls of the more narrow street through which it had been passing.

After nightfall, ordinarily, La Salle Street was quiet, though brilliantly lighted. But to-night it was a scene of feverish activity. The street was jammed with automobile trucks; the windows of

nearly every building blazed with lights; men bearing compact, steel-bound boxes were hurrying down the broad, marble steps, and placing their burdens in the automobiles.

Seebar could see that here, too, the results of the election were known, and the last shipments of coin were being made out of the country.

At one of these buildings, a hatless, gray-headed man in a frock coat, with a fine, yet strong face, stood, holding open the great door. As Seebar saw him he had a vague feeling of uneasiness—almost of foreboding.

The automobile trucks partially impeded progress, and the mob, overflowing pavement and sidewalk, was rising up the steps of the building like a tide. And step by step Seebar was borne up with it, close to where the banker stood, holding open the door. Momentarily the press was growing thicker. Men were beginning to struggle for room, and twisting his head around, Seebar saw that the faces were still streaming in endlessly.

The red-haired boy, who had started the rush thither, had disappeared and been forgotten. Men were beginning to ask themselves what it was all about; what they were there for. This crowding about a man standing against a pillar and holding open a door was beginning to have a tinge of the absurd in it.

The unexpected tragedy came quickly. Four men had appeared, struggling with a box, apparently of great weight. The dignified banker stooped to assist, and as he did so the door swung shut, sweeping the eyeglasses from his face. Some one hooted, and in a spirit of mere idle mischievousness others took up the cry, raising a derisive shout.

In a sudden overwhelming rush of the crowd that followed, Seebar found himself struggling and gasping for breath. The horde of men swarmed thick about the banker. They were pushing him farther and farther back. Then something obstructed progress in that direction. But still the crowd pressed on. Suddenly the

gray head seemed to bend back, and above the din rose one awful, screaming cry.

The mob swung away, like the receding of a wave.

And then Seebar beheld the horror. The gray-haired man, forced against the side railing and bent over backward, was now hanging across it at the waist like a partially emptied sack.

Some one lifted the body and attempted to set it on its feet. But eluding his grasp it slipped to the steps, and lay, a huddled thing, face to one side, with one hand sprawled out. Slowly a bright red stream trickled from the mouth, down the marble steps.

In sickening, helpless horror Seebar watched it.

Red! That was the color of the new national flag, emblematic of the universal brotherhood of man.

CHAPTER IV

THE EVICTION

IT was several months after that terrible night—to be exact, the twenty-ninth day of March, 1953—that Alfred Seebar descended into the mono-rail subway at State and Van Buren streets, and took the train for the North Shore. His destination was the home of the Markhams.

In spite of his hope that his relations with Dorothy Markham would be renewed after the election, he had neither seen her nor heard from her since that summer night, now many months back, when he had pleaded with her in her father's library. As before the night of that interview, his letters still remained unanswered. He had not quite despaired, however, and it was ever in his mind to see her again, and soon.

But it was not the hope of a reconciliation that prompted him to make a visit this March morn-

ing. It was a decree of the Supreme Court of the United States, handed down but yesterday, that had impelled him to this sudden resolution and action.

Though the new Constitution adopted on election day in the previous November was by its own terms to go into immediate effect, even with nearly five months intervening the machinery of the new régime was not, as yet, working at all smoothly. There seemed to be endless confusion and resistance to the new order. The courts had been called upon time and again to pass upon the constitutionality of certain seizures or threatened seizures of property. The judges, elected by direct vote of the people for limited periods, leaned heavily toward governmental claims in their decisions.

Only the day before, the question of the disposition of houses occupied by their owners had been settled. The new Constitution, through oversight in its framing, had been ambiguous upon this, as upon several other points. The

decree of the Supreme Court had been sweeping and final. All residential property still in the hands of private owners must be vacated at once. The age had gone mad over specialization, concentration, and big-scale production. This had spread even to the mode of living. It was estimated that families could live at a less cost, and better, if they were housed under as few roofs as possible. Individual dwellings required individual heating plants, individual kitchens, individual dining-rooms. Concentration in municipal apartment houses or hotels would require less labor, besides husbanding the Nation's resources. Individual family life must largely vanish, but big-scale living, like big-scale production, was the Socialist ideal.

"There is room, plenty of it," ran the wording of the Supreme Court decision, "in the huge office buildings, empty stores, and hotels, to accommodate the entire population of the big cities."

This was indeed practically true, and many of

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the sky-piercers, now necessarily abandoned by business men, had been converted into municipal apartment buildings. Faverall Markham had been one of those most conspicuous in fighting the confiscation of their homes by the state. But the state had won. And now the state had marked him out as among the first to be evicted. Swift and summary action, it was declared, would vindicate the strength and power of the new government.

As "General Superintendent of Chicago and Adjacent Suburbs," such was the title under which he had been elected, Seebar and his subordinates were called upon by the duties of their office to oversee the removal of Mr. Markham and several other conspicuously obstinate thwarters of the government's plans. Seebar feared the harsh measures that might be adopted and dreaded the thought of the brusque treatment, which, in all probability, would be accorded father and daughter. His presence, he felt, would at least prevent that.

It was some thirty miles that he had to go. In his preoccupied state of mind it seemed but the interval of a minute from the stepping into the elevator that carried him down into the subway to his arrival at his destination,—a little beyond Highland Park. And all the way his mind ran on but one thing—that was his hope that the Markhams had submitted to the inevitable and departed, leaving the officials in full charge of the removal.

He had telephoned ahead, and one of his subordinates, Ransome by name, was awaiting him with a motor car.

"How are things going?" asked Seebar, as he took his seat.

"Oh, well enough, I guess," Ransome answered indifferently, and then they shot away, and drawing in a long breath, Seebar grew silent, lacking the courage to ask a more specific question.

How well he knew the details of that road! How often had he passed over it in the old days! Even then the tenets of the Great Change

had already begun to fascinate him,—the Great Change, which, at that time only a possibility of the future, he had always somehow instinctively felt to be a menace to Dorothy.

The road, hard, smooth, gleaming white in the morning sun, followed the shore line of the lake, the waters of which reached in a blue flood, to-day varied here and there with purple and green, and salmon-hued tints, out to a misty horizon. Huge, black-hulled craft, engaged in the commerce of the inland ports, shot over the waves at a high rate of speed. To the west of the drive, but visible through a screen of trees, stood the residences of " Millionaires' Row."

Presently the car drove around a bend in the road and they had come upon the Markham home.

Seebar was not quite prepared for the scene that met his eye. He had expected to find a few idle onlookers, gazing curiously from outside the premises, while the work of removing the furniture and other family effects should go quietly

forward. Perhaps Mr. Markham would be giving directions, and possibly Dorothy would be somewhere about. If all seemed well, it had been his intention to pass on; only in the event of apparent need would he stop.

But as the lawn and buildings broke to view through the trees, Seebar noted no signs of life about the place. Already an air of desolation seemed subtly to emanate from the old mansion.

He was about to ask Ransome what this meant, but as the chauffeur brought the machine to a stop directly in front of the walk that led up to the veranda, for the first time Seebar had an unobstructed view of the premises, and he understood for himself.

With a cry of amazement and indignation he leaped out.

The grass was strewn with paper and bits of rubbish, the flowers trampled upon, the furniture piled in reckless confusion. Paintings were mingled with kitchen utensils, and the delicate leg of an ivory-carved table, he hastily noted,

had been jammed through a canvas of immense size.

He turned an accusing glance upon Ransome, and the latter grew embarrassed beneath the stern gaze.

"What sort of a pillage is this?" thundered Seebar. "What do you mean by smashing up the furniture in this fashion? Where are your vans? Why aren't these things carted away?"

The man remained silent.

Seebar advanced a step. "Answer me," he commanded menacingly.

"I can't help it," returned Ransome, sullenly. "These movers are government employees. I can't do anything with them. I can't fire them. I guess they've gone over to old Morton's place to take out the stuff there."

Without further word, Seebar, hot with indignation, strode up the walk leading to the veranda. At the foot of the steps he paused and surveyed for a moment the house and its surroundings. It was a fine old structure of marble

and polished granite, for in spite of the fact that even in the case of hotels and private dwellings, concrete, reinforced with steel, had, even so far back as this, driven out all other kinds of building material, the very wealthy still persisted in using these older materials. The entrance was guarded by massive double doors, brass-studded.

As he turned his back toward the house for a moment, his eyes ran over the bright-green turf, set with rare shrubs, and over white wandering paths, leading back to the pavement. Over and beyond, the waters of the lake tumbled.

Starting again to mount the steps, he paused at the thought that perhaps the Markhams were about. Somehow or other, from the moment he had first caught sight of the grounds to-day he had taken it for granted that they had departed. But why had he taken it for granted? If Dorothy and her father were still within—If at the door of this sacked and desecrated dwelling he should meet either of them—The thought chilled

him like a fear. To them it would appear a cold, impertinent inquisitivenes, a coarse invasion of the privacy of their grief.

Still as he looked down upon the littered steps, and back again at the quiet, silent building, it seeemed absurd to think its owners should be lingering there. Besides if he did not oversee the removal of these goods, who would? If the exterior of the house were an index to the condition of the interior, things there also must be in a pathetic state of disorder.

He halted in indecision, and was about to call Ransome, who was lingering sullenly on the sidewalk, when the question was unexpectedly answered for him. At that instant the big front door began slowly to open, while he watched, half-eager, half-dismayed. His suspense was but for a moment, and then Faverall Markham appeared.

The strong, fine face of the old man was stern and set. His cheeks were thinner than when Seebar had last seen him, and there was an un-

wonted grayish hue to the skin. Otherwise, high hat, frock coat, cane and all, Faverall Markham seemed himself.

As with firm step and erect carriage he passed Seebar, his gaze was fixed ahead in a tense, meditative stare. Seebar had seen such a look but once before. That was upon the face of a rescued miner who had faced death for three days underground. The old millionaire did not appear to be aware of the young man's presence. Past him, his cane tapping upon veranda floor and steps, down the walk he continued his way, and then Seebar quietly opened the door and slipped in.

Within, the desolation that met the eye outside was repeated. The floor was stripped of its rugs, the tapestries torn from the walls,—one alone remained, half-hanging in its place, now presenting the reversed side of a mounted knight turned topsy-turvey. And through the silence, cutting it like a knife, ticked the great hall clock.

Seebar had but one purpose in mind: to see

what there was left to do, and then, after making sure his orders were carried out, to take his departure.

He hurried toward the library. The door was slightly ajar. Here was the last place he had seen *her*. Softly, almost reverently, he pushed open the door and looked in.

The window curtains were partly drawn, leaving the room in semi-darkness, and the busts and big easy chairs showed indistinct in the partial dusk. The great lines of books, massed shelf above shelf, had no identity as volumes, but shrank back into the walls.

There was the huge round table, at which he and Mr. Markham had sat for that last time, when the steel manufacturer had practically forbidden the young politician his home. A sturdy, noble piece of furniture it was, hallowed by memories that reached back almost to the beginning of his love for Dorothy. Its polished surface was wont to reflect the shaded light, in a soft, illuminating glow that brought out the

curves and color of her cheeks and the brightness of her eyes.

He took a step forward and then stopped.

Over near the window, where the light of day sifted through, some one occupied a chair, with forehead resting on the back. It was a woman. And then it came upon Seebar with a rush that the woman must be Dorothy.

Dorothy! His head spun, and his pulses beat vengefully at his wrists.

And as he looked he could see the sheen of her hair in the ray of light, as one long exhausting sob shook her body. He longed to throw himself on his knees at her side, to soothe her in his arms, to beg her forgiveness. Thus he stood, hesitating between his doubts and his desires.

As he stood and watched, suddenly she raised her head, shook out a mass of disheveled hair, and turned her eyes in his direction. Like a thief he shrank back, hiding himself in the gloom of the hall. He paused for a moment, trying to gain courage to re-enter.

Then as he thought he heard a movement within, as of a rustling of skirts, his tottering courage crumbled, and he fled to the door and out upon the veranda.

A buzz of voices greeted his ears, and Seebar knew something untoward was taking place on the sidewalk, against which three big automobile trucks had been backed. The movers, eight or ten in number, had reassembled, and Faverall Markham stood in their midst. Even as Seebar caught the sound and looked, a hush fell, and then a single voice, loud, insolent, taunting, rose:

"And so you want us to be more careful, eh, Gov'nor? Hell, I can't help it if the piano does belong to your daughter. I've seen lots of pianos dropped and split in my time. 'Careful!'" The word was repeated with ineffable scorn. "Careful, he wants *me* to be careful! Look at him, boys, the ex-millionaire, the man who had me fired from his mills for criminal carelessness, when it was the foreman's fault that the steel exploded. Oh, you needn't frown at me, old

plug hat, I ain't trembling at you. I can say what I damn please and to who I damn please, see?"

There came a response too low for Seebar to hear.

"Ah, I'm your good man, am I, and let you pass? Well, maybe I will and maybe I won't. Who are you that wants to get by, eh? I'm just as good a man as you are. Why don't you get out of my way and let me pass?"

"That's right, Jack, go for him," some one in the crowd encouraged banteringly, and a laugh followed.

Seebar, glowing with anger, started down the steps toward the group.

The man addressed as Jack was a big burly fellow, with a nasty ragged scar on his right cheek that ran across the brow, giving a squinting appearance to his right eye. His hat was pushed back, showing close-cropped hair, and his ears stood out almost straight,—large, flabby, and shapeless. Just now his lower jaw was

thrust forward in an insolent, impudent fashion, that, had it been within arm's length, would strongly have tempted Seebar to send his fist crashing against it.

Mr. Markham's face, as he attempted to turn aside, showed white and stern, in the midst of the grinning group. The ugly leer was still spread over the man Jack's countenance, and now he thrust his palm, with fingers spread, jeeringly before the eyes of the proud old man.

Seebar sprang forward.

But some one with eyes as sharp to see and with sympathies quicker to feel was before him. It was Dorothy.

Past him she sped, her hair, a chestnut cloud, flying behind her. The men melted from her path, and once at her father's side she threw her arms about his neck and clung there.

But the brutal Jack, fatuous to a degree, not noticing that the crowd was no longer smiling, ripped out a coarse jest. Instantly a fist shot out,—a brown fist that struck with a resounding

crash upon the insolent, protruding jaw, just as Seebar's fist had longed to do, and the man went down in a heap.

It was just a plain, ordinary young fellow, one of the movers, who had struck the blow; the kind of young fellow whose manhood redeems in part the whole race of men.

Seebar gripped his hand and thanked him warmly. Then he spoke to Ransome. "Put this man under arrest," he ordered, pointing to the half-senseless and wholly stunned bully.

He turned from giving his directions to Ransome to meet Dorothy's accusing, tear-filled eyes. "And this—this is your Socialism," they seemed to say.

Then her head dropped once more on her father's breast.

CHAPTER V

A PECULIAR WELCOME

WHEN Seebar at length left the old Markham home he did not return immediately to the city, for a new anxiety gripped his heart. Up to that moment the question of the fate of Dorothy and her father had absorbed all his fears and sympathies. But now, after he had seen the two safely aboard the train that was to bear them to one of the newly improvised hotels in the city, his mind was free for the moment to turn to other things, and it reverted, as it had often done in the past several months,—indeed, ever since the receipt of that letter the night of the election,—to the future of his Uncle Richard.

The country districts, voting almost as a unit against the radicalism of the cities, had not only lost in the elections, but they had also incurred the ill-will of the city dwellers. Whatever the

merits of the issues may have been, it was, perhaps, just as well that the vote resulted as it did. For it is doubtful if the metropolitans, almost insanely enthusiastic as they were over the Socialistic principles that had at last carried the citadels of Capitalism, would have submitted to their plans and hopes being thwarted thus. Civil war might have followed. On the other hand, the farmers had no thought of resisting. They lacked the cohesion that the close-packed city dwellers have always possessed. That little resistance which did appear was as sporadic as it was futile.

The new régime meant the shifting of families to other lands, and in this redistributing, already there was a mad rush for the soil—such as was wont to occur in the closing years of the nineteenth, and the opening years of the twentieth, century when reservations,—lands that had been set apart, usually for occupation by Indians,—were thrown open to public settlement. For, in spite of the Socialistic principle of "public

ownership in the instruments of production," many persons evidently believed that land occupation amounted very nearly to individual ownership, and individual ownership of land, even in a Socialistic state, was a thing not to be regarded with indifference. That they were mistaken in their understanding as to the methods by which this land was to be occupied and cultivated has nothing to do with the presence of this feeling,—this desire for private ownership in a Socialistic state.

Seebar wondered how his uncle had fared in the midst of all this change. He knew that the work of farm consolidation had been going on for some weeks now. Perhaps the removal had already been ordered; perhaps might even then be taking place. The thought brought him out of his reverie. A word to the chauffeur, and the automobile was turned into a road leading westward.

It was a little past the noon hour when Seebar's car ascended a long rolling swell in the prairie

over which the road now ran in its wanderings through the fertile Illinois countryside. The land, crop-sown, dipped and stretched away in a great sweep of green. White roads led in various directions, winding threads, criss-crossing each other like the lines of a map. At the farther foot of the rise in the prairie lay the little farm. Across the meadows a bit of creek flashed its way, light-shot by the sun's rays.

Uncle Richard's house and farm buildings,—of white concrete,—were conspicuous objects in the black background of barnyard—white and black upon a great field of green.

Down the gentle slope the automobile rolled, and came to a stop in front of the gate.

A figure was standing there, and in the first glance Seebar recognized Jake, the hired man. He was leaning on the gate, his hands on the pointed palings, chin on knuckles. A wooden pipe, from which at intervals he emitted a little burst of smoke, was loosely held between the lips. His eyes were curious and half-hostile.

"Hello, Jake, how are you?" was Seebar's greeting, and he descended from the motor car, stepping carefully across a little patch of water in the road, trace of a recent rain, and reached out his hand.

The man's lips began to set over the stem of his pipe, and the lines of his open, sun-browned face to grow hard. His eyes ranged coolly over Seebar, and then with a calmness born of peaceful days and well-slept nights, he leisurely removed the pipe from his lips, knocked out the ashes on the gatepost, and, with the words, "No, thank you, you may be the boss's nephew, but I'll be damned if I'll shake hands with a Socialist," turned away deliberately, and calmly shuffled off, leaving Seebar, surprised and a bit mortified, to open the gate for himself.

He went around to the back door and paused as he was about to knock. He could hear some one within, moving about briskly, singing in a high-keyed, feminine voice.

He half-smiled. "Martha," he said to him-

self, and the old housekeeper's hospitable, earnest face, looking just as it was wont to do when she was urging upon him another quarter of one of her mince pies, came before him.

The sun shone warmly on the doorstep, and a sleek black cat came and arched its back against his legs, blinking at him with sleepy yellow eyes, and purring enthusiastically.

This last Seebar took as an auspicious sign.

"Of course she'll be glad to see me," he emboldened himself by saying.

From inside came the swish of water and the rattle of dishes. Still the high-pitched song went on.

He knocked; the singing stopped. Then came a final swish. A moment's silence followed, and all at once Seebar was looking up into Martha's eyes. The smile of greeting half-formed froze on the round, plump face. For a moment she stared her astonishment.

"Well, of all the impudent——" she began, and then, apparently fully recovering herself,

abruptly banged shut the door. Very distinctly the key clicked in the lock.

"This beats me," muttered Seebar. He was no longer amused, as he had been by Jake's attitude. He felt hurt. "What kind of a brigand do they take me for, anyway? I hope Uncle Dick——"

But some one was rushing toward him with outstretched arms, a look of eager, unfeigned welcome on his face. "Why, Alfred, my boy," exclaimed Uncle Richard, grasping both of Seebar's hands in his, in a hearty grip, "how are you? How does it seem to be a big man?"

"Well, I have my doubts as to whether I am a big man. That depends somewhat on the point of view. Now Jake there," and Seebar pointed to where the hired man stood, loitering uncompromisingly, in the shadow of the barns, "thinks I'm wholly unworthy of his friendship, and as for Martha, she seems to fear me as much as if I were one of the tramps of the old days we read about."

"I'm sorry, Alfred, my boy, sorry that you've been treated like this, I am indeed." Mr. Tompkins' gentle old face kindled with sympathy. "But you mustn't mind it, my boy. They'll come 'round all right. They're just a bit prejudiced against the Socialists, because,—well, you see, the government has requested me to give up my little place. We're going to have a general home for a dozen families 'round here, a sort of farmer's hotel, or country resort, you see. No more loneliness on long winter evenings—always company, always cheerfulness and happiness. It will sort of break the monotony of our lives."

Though his uncle spoke in a cheery, bantering tone, Seebar caught the note of keen regret at leaving the old place, and his heart went out to him. But what could he say by way of comfort? Nothing! A leader of the movement which, as one of its incidental consequences, deprived the old man of his home, Seebar felt that any words of sympathy were as the tears of the crocodile.

They were following a winding path out past

plum trees in full, strong-scented bloom. As Seebar stepped behind his uncle, he observed the old man's broad back, somewhat bent, the slight shuffle in his gait, the wrinkles of age creasing his neck, browned by sun and wind, the little tuft of hair on his bared gray head, fluttering in the breeze in an oddly whimsical curl, and his sense of regret became doubly poignant.

For Seebar was a sentimentalist and idealist, a dreamer, full of quick sympathies, and yet a practical dreamer. He was capable of putting his dreams into execution, as his nomination and election proved; likewise he was capable of subordinating personal feelings to his dreams, as when he broke off relations with Dorothy Markham. And now, while he reflected how his uncle had paid for his education, and had done a thousand and one other kindnesses, not all material kindnesses either, his conscience was perfectly at ease. He felt the quick sympathy of the surgeon for the suffering he was inflicting, but felt that it was for the good of the body,—the public

body. Accordingly, while his heart bled for his Uncle Dick, he did not regret even so much as for a single instant the success of the grand scheme itself.

It seemed a pity, though, that the plan should work such hardship in individual cases, and he wondered if the drastic steps that were being taken in reapportioning the farm lands were at all necessary. It all smacked somewhat of retaliation for the well-nigh complete Anti-Socialistic vote the rural districts had cast.

"I'm going to show you my chickens," said Uncle Richard, stopping and facing about. "I've had unusually good luck this year, and I'm mighty glad of it, too. It won't do me any good financially, but it makes a fellow feel sort of pleasant to know that even the chickens seem to appreciate it's their last chance to make a showing. Then, if the signs are right, we're going to have a mighty big crop of fruit this year—just see those blossoms, just smell them! It's shady here with them, and the leaves are only just be-

ginning to shoot. And listen to how the bees are humming. They're just drunk with the richness of it. If Maria had only lived to see this, but then, if she had lived, she'd have hated to leave it all."

Somehow Seebar felt a tightness about the throat. "When do you expect—when are you going to move?" he asked.

"Not till fall, at the very earliest, perhaps not till next spring. As I understand it, they are finding it rather hard to make things operate."

They were at the poultry yard now, and Uncle Dick had thrown open the gate to admit Seebar. The place was full of clucking hens, each with her little brood of black or yellow chicks, that skurried and hung about her like a swarm of merchant vessels about their convoy.

"Three hundred and fifty of them," said Uncle Dick, proudly, "and I don't use incubators. I'm a quarter of a century behind the times in this respect; at any rate, so my neighbors tell me, but the results are quite satisfactory."

Over his broad-brimmed spectacles he smiled upon Seebar, all aglow with a simple pride.

"Three hundred and fifty of them," he repeated; "yes, it's going to be a great year—a year of plenty."

Certainly the new order of things would take much of the simple sweetness out of life. The quiet country home soon would be a thing of the past. In its place was to come a huge estate to which were to be applied the principles of commercial big-scale production. The farmer was no longer to be an independent man, planting and reaping for himself in the old way, but was to become a hireling, his individuality merged largely into the interests of a group.

"The great economic changes have always wrought temporary hardship," reflected Seebar. "The English industrial revolution bringing in the factory system, in the early years of the nineteenth century, that threw multitudes out of employment, the trust organizations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, that crushed out

the small competitor—these, so terrible during the transition period, ultimately proved blessings."

And so he consoled himself with a mathematical proposition that the whole is greater than any of its parts, and applied this to the welfare of society as against the welfare of the individual.

Uncle Dick was now leading him back to the house. "The one thing I don't feel quite right about," he was saying, "is that they are going to remove this house. It's a small affair, and doesn't fit in with present economic plans. Now that's all very well, but don't you think we Socialists are getting a bit too materialistic? Isn't there something more in life than sweeping aside everything for material progress?"

And then seeing the look of positive pain in Seebar's eyes, he added, clapping his nephew on the shoulder, "Well, never mind, my boy, you're not to blame, so don't take it to heart. Come, let's make friends now with Martha and Jake."

Already Martha had abandoned her attitude of

defiance; there was a softened light in her eye as she turned her gaze upon the pair for an instant, and then quietly resumed her household duties, interrupted for the moment by their entrance.

"Martha, aren't you going to speak to Alfred?" Uncle Dick inquired in solicitous tones. There was a faint gleam of humor in his eye, however, as he put the question. Evidently he was thoroughly familiar with Martha's ways.

She did not appear to hear him.

"A little deaf at times, Alfred," said Uncle Dick; "a little absent-minded, too. Sometimes I'm afraid she's losing her memory. She's been with me two years now, and when she came she was that lively and chipper! But she's aging fast, now; yes, she's aging fast. It's such a pity, too."

Martha raised the lids of her eyes just long enough to shoot an indignant look at Uncle Dick.

He seemed unconscious of this.

"So you mustn't mind it, Alfred," he went on smoothly, "if she seems to act queer. Memory

for faces gone, you know—just a wee bit scared of strangers too, apparently."

Martha gave him another look, a look in which fire danced.

Uncle Dick lowered his voice. "Not so deaf as I thought, I guess. Might have heard that last, don't you think? She's mighty sensitive about her infirmities."

But Martha could stand no more. "Ain't you ashamed of yourself, Mr. Richard Tompkins, talking about me like that—and me only thirty-eight years old, and been a widow these three years, going on four now, with little Josie there,—ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

Uncle Dick completely ignored the outburst. He seemed absolutely unruffled.

"Of course, Martha, you remember Alfred," he answered. "Says he didn't get that last batch of mince pies we promised to send him. It's such a pity, too, because you know how fond Alfred has always been of your mince pies."

To Seebar's amused eyes it was evident from

Martha's hesitating, indecisive attitude that this subtle flattery mingled with the undercurrent of appeal had touched her; and that, moreover, she was already ashamed of her outburst.

But she was not quite ready to "make up."

It remained for Josie, Martha's five-year-old girl, to re-cement the broken bonds of friendship. Coming dashing into the kitchen, round-eyed, her head a mass of dark tangled curls, suddenly she paused and then began to draw back, somewhat fearfully, her finger in her mouth, with a look of mingled wonder and dismay.

"Oh, he's a Soc'awist! Jake says he is." And then, having regained the door, she turned and fled.

Seebar laughed, while Uncle Dick burst into a hearty roar.

Martha's eyes were alight with motherly love and pride. "Now isn't she the cutest——" she began.

But a huge guffaw just outside the kitchen door smothered all other sounds. And there stood Jake, shaking all over with mirth.

"Oh, you rascal, you rascal," exclaimed Uncle Richard, "to put Josie up to such tricks. Come forward now like a man and shake hands with Alfred. He hasn't changed a bit, Jake, just the same boy he always was—to me. And you'll find him the same, too."

Jake shuffled in, a trifle clumsily, but Seebar could see that this was due to embarrassment rather than to any ill-will toward himself.

An awkward pause was broken by Martha saying timidly, "Alfred, I've got some mince pies—if you're a bit hungry."

She waited anxiously.

"Why, surely, Martha, thank you," Seebar responded heartily. "And come to think of it I haven't had anything to eat since early this morning. But let's find little Josie, and make friends with her once more, too."

It was a pleasant afternoon that Seebar spent on his uncle's farm—indeed for many a week afterward whenever he reflected upon that afternoon it was with a sigh.

CHAPTER VI

THE MARKHAMS COME TO TOWN

IN spite of the defiant attitude that Dorothy Markham had assumed toward Seebar, it was with a pang of utter isolation and loneliness that she saw his broad shoulders swing from sight behind the pillars of the subway station where he had left her and her father after conducting them thither. She felt that, regardless of the part he had played in helping to bring about the fatal new era, still he was the one connecting link with the past. Seebar had offered to accompany them to the city to see them safely settled in the quarters assigned them, and Dorothy already regretted she had not accepted this offer. Yet she felt no gratitude toward him for his assistance. Indeed, as she turned to her father sitting so unwontedly silent and subdued, she felt very certain that she hated Seebar.

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The wheels of the car began to slip and turn on the single rail, and as the speed increased, they presently broke forth into a rich, vibrant, penetrating purr. In the ride's brief duration, a multitude of thoughts had time to crowd through Dorothy's brain, and Seebar formed the nucleus of them all. She remembered only too well the first time she had met him. Her father had introduced him as a practising lawyer, the son of his old friend, Henry Seebar, the financier. Arising from his chair he had loomed up tall, of good figure, with clear, earnest eyes. His was a compelling personality, and Dorothy had been drawn to him as she had never before been drawn to any man. His political doctrines had both interested and amused her. This, following the suggestion of her father, she had believed to be the one insincere note in the man. Why, she had no particular reason for saying, except as she had once naïvely admitted, it was incredible that a man of his birth and position should be a Socialist. If, however, she had asked herself why

this was incredible she could not have answered. Many men of birth and wealth were in the ranks of the Socialists.

He had, too, the dramatic instinct of the public speaker. By Dorothy and her father, Seebar's espousal of Socialism had been regarded merely as a pose. His speech in the Convention and subsequent nomination had come as a thunderclap to both. It was this underlying sense of the dramatic—his egotism and vanity, Faverall Markham called it,—that Dorothy believed had carried Seebar beyond his purpose. If he really loved her, she reasoned, how could it be possible that he would follow a course that must inevitably wound and crush her? She decided that he had temporarily lost his head and that his ambitious vanity would not permit him to recant. She too had had her ambition,—her ambition to be an artist,—and yet how cheerfully, even how gladly, had she looked forward to abandoning a career for the man she loved! Looking back over it all, she thought it strangely unreal that the Seebar

she had known, despite his ambition, could have acted as he had.

But dislike, hate him, as she believed she did, still, as the train began to slow down, once more she wished that she had not so summarily dismissed him. She shrank from applying for the quarters assigned them in the municipal apartment building, the Pelion.

Their station was just north of the Chicago River, and to Dorothy's thinking they arrived too soon. Presently they had stepped into one of the many elevators that served the purpose of conveying passengers to and from the mono-rail subway, and were on the street level, in the station building.

From the open side of the structure, facing toward the river on the south, they could see the same city, the city of uproar and seeming confusion. For the moment, sequestered as she had been this many a day, Dorothy felt a leaping of the heart at the stir of life about her. Then again came the depression—a feeling mingled

almost with terror, at the thought of becoming a part of this life.

And still it was not the same city. There was a leisure in the bearing of those who passed that was perplexing. The tumult and hum that had made Chicago famous for three-quarters of a century as the city of incontinent speed had not vanished. But the people themselves no longer made haste. The absence of the stimulus of competition had begun to show its effects in the slowing up in speed. But it was the same old throng, after all, the same faces of hope and contentment, of care and anxiety.

Mr. Markham stood silent. The life streaming before him apparently evoked in him but little interest. Dorothy, timidly clutching his coat sleeve, was becoming alarmed. Her father seemed dazed, stunned by all that had happened. Occasionally she addressed him, but his vague replies showed how heedless he was of her words. She had always been sheltered, always protected from the realities of life as only the wealthy, in-

dulgent American fathers had known how to weaken and spoil their daughters. And now her father, who had always stood between her and fact, had himself that morning suddenly become as a child. He was not dejected, apparently. It was a strange abstraction that seemed to have left him helpless, like a lost bird in a hostile region. And in the midst of her troubles and perplexities Dorothy felt a pang of heart-ache, almost of terror even, at the thought that perhaps her father's spirit was already crushed.

For ten minutes perhaps did they thus remain. Then Dorothy turned to one of the government railway employees standing near, and timidly enquired concerning an electric cab.

"Cab?" he repeated. "Oh, my dear young lady, they're things of the past. It's either walk, or take an overhead, or the local subway."

There was an easy familiarity in the man's bearing that caused Dorothy to shrink back. In the past, her quiet, well-bred manner had invariably elicited deference. She could not bring

herself, as yet, to a realization of what their new status with relation to society really meant.

On the edge of the sidewalk they halted, Dorothy clinging closer still to her father. She was afraid now to ask any one for directions. Vaguely she remembered Seebar's saying that the Pelion was in the old "Loop District." That was immediately south of the river, in area about a square mile. Once more how she did long for Seebar!

People slowly eddied about them in a leisurely holiday fashion, and still she feared to trust herself in the slow-flowing current.

Then, almost before she knew it, they had stepped from the friendly shelter of the station, and they were walking toward one of the many bridges that spanned the North Branch of the Chicago River.

With a score of subways connecting, underneath this river, the north and middle sections of the city, Chicago was still obliged to employ the old time bascule or "jack-knife" bridges in order

to accommodate the enormous press of traffic that found itself crowded out of the jammed subways and overhead roads—bridges that split in two in the middle and heaved up to allow the huge turbine-driven boats to find egress to the Great Lakes, then down the Great Canal and Mississippi River to New Orleans and the Gulf, outward bound for the ports of the world. The pair were obliged to stop for a few minutes while an enormous craft slowly and silently nosed her way through, leaving behind a great swish of waves that beat sullenly against the concrete-built banks. Then the heavy floors of the bridge, lowered into place, rattled together, and once more traffic, still in the same bewilderingly easy-going fashion, resumed its interrupted flow across, and Dorothy and her father were slowly wafted with the current.

It was a curious thing on passing shop after shop to see them empty. Moreover, the pavements did not present their accustomed sight of activity. The pleasure and delivery automobiles

were gone. Only motor trucks laden with building material passed along.

As they entered into what had been the heart of the business district, the way became almost blocked with the piles of steel beams and concrete material. The windows of the great buildings swarmed with workmen. It was all strange, puzzling, bewildering.

But where was the Pelion; in which street of the many streets in that square mile; which of the many buildings in that street? Then at a street crossing, the two ran square into a tall red-coated policeman. This was their salvation. The officer's white-gloved fingers pointed out the building they sought. The Pelion was close at hand, but a square and a half away.

CHAPTER VII

AT THE PELION

ON the morning of the particular spring day on which these events were occurring, Henry Bornheim lounged in one of the big public waiting rooms of the Municipal Administration Building. He had gone late to bed the night before, as was his custom, and, as was his custom also, he had breakfasted late, at the Pelion, where he had his quarters.

An easy-going man was Henry Bornheim,—a firm believer in the luxuries, pleasures, and irresponsibilities of life. In the campaign he had worked hard, as politicians count work. Now he was enjoying the fruits of his industry. He was a handsome man, polished, as well read in life as in literature, of considerable adaptability in his intercourse with persons.

This morning he sat leisurely perusing a copy

of the government newspaper till such time as he chose to repair to his office upstairs.

In the corner a telegraph instrument was clicking briskly, and the clerk had sent a boy upstairs with a message from over the wire. Presently the boy returned.

"Mr. Lessing's not there," he announced.

Bornheim looked up. "What is it—a telegram for Lessing?" he asked. "I'll receive it for him," and he reached out his hand.

He read the yellow slip of paper once hastily and carefully a second time.

Meet Markham and daughter at North State Subway Station at once. Conduct them to Pelion.

SEEBAR.

"Humph," muttered Bornheim. "Seebar's acting the Providential, and looking after the fallen sparrows, is he? Lessing not being here I might as well act the guardian angel myself."

Then he once more inspected the telegram.

"Dated nearly an hour ago. I guess I'll just walk over to the Pelion."

And so it happened that, owing to their long delay in the station, a moment after Dorothy and her father had entered the Pelion, Bornheim also had stepped in under the arched façade of the building.

Women were idling about on the easy chairs and rockers that strewed the long hall and the adjacent rooms that opened upon it, and children played about everywhere.

As Bornheim's eye wandered over the scene before him his attention was drawn to an elderly man in company with a young woman of some twenty-four or -five, who was engaged in earnest conversation with one of the housekeepers, as the male heads of the establishment were called. He recognized the elderly man as Faverall Markham, and surmised that his companion must be his daughter.

"I am sorry," Bornheim could hear the housekeeper say, as he drew nearer, "but if you

haven't your ticket to present, I can't assign you to your quarters."

"But—but——" and Dorothy turned about as if for aid somewhere in that dawdling assemblage.

"If this is Miss Markham perhaps I can help you," began Bornheim. His eyes rested on her erect, supple, yet somewhat full, figure.

"Yes," said Dorothy doubtfully, "yes."

"Well," continued Bornheim, "I have here a telegram from Mr. Seebar, directing me to see you safely established in the Pelion." And he turned and whispered a few words to the housekeeper.

"It's all right, I guess, Miss Markham," said that functionary; "we're giving you a pretty good place on the third floor," and turning to a safe behind him he threw it open and from a great row of shining keys that dangled, jingling tunefully as he tapped the row, he selected one and passed it over the counter to Dorothy.

She drew a heavy sigh of relief. "May I

not know whom I have to thank?" she said. "It has all been so terrible, this being driven from one's home, and the insolence of the people. And my father seems so different, and indeed everything is so different——"

It was with difficulty she was keeping back her tears.

When they stepped out of the elevator on the third floor, and Bornheim had unlocked the door to the apartments of father and daughter, it was natural enough that Dorothy, in her isolation and fear and gratitude, should ask Bornheim to stay a moment.

The apartment that had been assigned them was quite pleasant. There were four rooms in all, and two of these looked out upon the street. Bornheim told them there were a thousand families in the building.

"The Pelion is really a great hotel!" he explained, inwardly admiring the girl's rich beauty as he talked. "The cooking for all is done in the kitchen, and one may have meals

served either in his own apartments or in the common dining halls. Most people prefer the latter. The government takes its pay for rent, cooking, food, laundry, services, etc., from the pay of each head of a family."

"But all the shops seem to be closed. What do people do for a living?" asked Dorothy.

Bornheim laughed, while heedful of the dark blue of her eyes which in her earnestness took on a violet tinge. "Why, we have shut down all the small places. All retail selling is done on the department store plan. The senseless competition of a multitude of small shops was a crime,—as, in fact, is all competition. Co-operation and consolidation are the watchwords. Think how men wasted their energies in useless labor under the old régime. Why, we've got rid of an army of traveling salesmen, clerks in shops, advertisement writers, bill-board posters, office forces, credit men, commercial buyers, cashiers, drivers of delivery wagons, bankers, real estate agents, stock exchange and board of trade men,

some doctors, all ministers, stenographers, shipping clerks, mail order houses, chauffeurs,—well, that's just a few, but it will give you an idea. Now these men are turning their energies to something really productive. We've an enormous army of men at work turning the big office buildings to their new uses. Every one is busy. There is scarcely an idle man in Chicago to-day."

Dorothy recalled the unwonted building activity that had puzzled her, and began to understand what it all meant.

"And—and father," her voice lowered, as she cast a glance toward the old man gazing abstractedly out of the window, at which he was seated: "will he have to go to work?"

Bornheim shifted uneasily in his chair. The question was fired straight at him. Behind it were leveled a pair of serious, truth-compelling eyes.

"Miss Markham, I will be frank with you," said he, with no attempt at evasion. "Under the present system all men are expected to work.

Labor, even with the hands, is considered more honorable than the idleness of the wealthy in the old days. Personal worth, reputation, is to take the place of money."

If Seebar had been there to hear these words he would have smiled—smiled derisively at Bornheim, the skeptical materialist, talking in this vein.

But Dorothy, as women often are, was insistently practical. "Yes, but what can father do?" she questioned.

"Yes, what can I do?" And Faverall Markham had turned, from gazing out of the window, in his old firm, aggressive way upon Bornheim.

Steeled as he had been for the adverse verdict of the courts, the decree of expulsion, nevertheless, had come as a severe blow. And then the eviction itself following hard upon this judicial decision had for the time being left him adrift and bewildered. His business gone, his home gone, a new and strange economic and political system suddenly forced upon him, in which none of his past experiences or achievements availed

him aught—all this left him as helpless as a pauper in an alien land. The power to direct men taken from him, his place in society now of no more significance than that of the veriest laborer, he temporarily crouched like a lion deprived of his teeth and claws.

The readjustment was easier for Dorothy than for her father. She was young, she was a woman, unfamiliar with the intricacies of commercialism. She was indeed bewildered, but not in the harsh, cruel way that the Great Change bewildered her father.

This last hour and a half he had been reviewing the situation. Time and again in the past he had faced great crises in the business world. Often these crises were of a character that had never before confronted him. Still they were only variations of the game—the great game of business. They were like new combinations in chess, but with shrewd calculation could be successfully met by applying the knowledge of the game learned in the past. But here the conditions

were different, the game itself absolutely new. He could see no solution of the problem. His mind was driven back upon itself, baffled.

And now as the old man felt himself helpless and at bay, it was with a fierceness that was disconcerting that he turned upon Bornheim, with the question, "What can I do?"

Bornheim was silent.

"What can I do?" the old man repeated. "What can any man do at fifty-nine?"

"All men of sixty-five are to be pensioned," Bornheim replied; "perhaps sooner," he added, rather lamely.

"And until I can become a state pauper what am I to do? Dig ditches, clean manholes? What?"

"I should think your knowledge of the steel industry would stand you in good stead."

"Knowledge of markets, knowledge of organizations, of the industry count for nothing, now, no, not the snap of a finger. And I understand," he went on, "that your superintendents and fore-

men are elected by the workmen of a plant from among themselves. I must go to work as a common laborer or a mere clerk. I built up the Western Steel Company. I was a laborer to begin with. I know what it is to swing pots of molten steel. I discovered new methods in the furnace processes. That was my start. It has been the task of a life-time to build up this business. We have had a tremendous output, and a magnificent foreign trade, and all without wronging a single man. We did not crush competitors; we did not cheat inventors. There were a score of men in our mills on the Calumet River who had risen to be stockholders and who were drawing royalties on their patents in use by us.

"And now you beat the whole system down in a minute. And why? You have had a six-hour day. Socialism can promise no better day, can it? There has been no misery or want, has there? Few accidents occur anywhere to-day in the industrial field. Widows and orphans don't suffer. Where the companies showed the slightest

reluctance to meet their just demands, the courts promptly stepped in. I know that this was not the case thirty, even twenty, years ago. Then the workingman was too often at the mercy of legal quibbles and technicalities. But common sense has prevailed in our courts. Man has at last had justice, has had it for the last quarter of a century.

"What do men want with this Socialism? What does it offer them they haven't had before? But—" and Mr. Markham's voice lowered—"the thing has been done. Protest is useless. And yet your leaders already are growing too bold. They will overreach themselves. The stopping of the private press was an act of repression, not an act of liberty. It was the first step toward absolutism. Now this government of yours publishes its own official sheet. The people have no knowledge of what is really going on, or how the new plan is succeeding. They may not be able to tell even in their own special field of employment. And with a worse than

muzzled press, dissatisfaction and discontent are, on the surface at least, absolutely quelled. It has no mode of finding expression. When it does burst it will be as a volcano.

"Moreover, it's an absurd form of the grossest materialism that you have instituted. You profess to have provided for the finer forms of work, yet authorship will become *nil,* and so will art. It is true you are talking about appointing commissions to select the best writers of the day, and a limited number of young men and women who show promise, to be kept at the expense of the state. But how are those who have not been so fortunate, writing in their leisure moments after their day's work for the state is done, to find an audience? There are no publishers. Literature and art will die. Fame, you say, will be a stimulus to produce the very best work. Do you think that fame is a sufficient stimulus for the artists and writers of the day? You say you hope to make it a sufficient stimulus. But can you?

"Your whole experiment is premature. You

have attempted to introduce Socialism by revolution and not by evolution,—by political methods, and not by the law of natural growth. Economics is not a matter of theoretical formula but of everyday fact."

As Mr. Markham talked, a look of relief crept into Dorothy's eyes. It was evident that his spirit was not broken, after all, by the great calamity that had befallen them. She knew him so thoroughly as to understand that he was already learning to adapt himself to the new condition, despite his vigorous protest.

Bornheim, too, seemed relieved at the turn the conversation had taken. It was much pleasanter to hear the Socialistic system arraigned than to discuss Mr. Markham's position under it.

His relief was intensified by the sound of clear-ringing electric bells.

"Lunch time," he explained. "When you are ready to go down, may I escort you to the dining room?"

"You said meals might be served in one's

rooms——" Dorothy began. But Mr. Markham broke in upon her words.

" We shall ask no favors," he said vehemently. " We may as well accustom ourselves, first as last, to things as they are. Why wait till evening, or to-morrow, or the next day? "

Yes, it was better, perhaps, that they should begin their new life at once, Dorothy agreed, though she still felt dazed and humiliated after the events of the morning. The immediate execution of the court's judgment had left no time for mental preparation. Had the severing of all ties with her past life come gradually, the ordeal might not perhaps have been so trying. Though it might be best to do as her father willed, she shrank from what lay before her.

Resignedly she began to make her few simple preparations—much simpler than they had been a short time back when a maid attended upon all her wants. Presently she was ready, and the three descended together.

Dorothy had once spent an afternoon at one of

those summer resorts frequented chiefly by transients, and the scene in the dining room appeared to her much like what she had witnessed on that occasion. A stampede seemed to have occurred. The place was in an uproar. Women were dragging children, scolding, and calling to them in high-pitched, querulous tones, and they were sweeping down in confused groups, confiscating table after table. There was a banging of chairs and an incessant clatter of tongues that was bewildering.

Bornheim, however, did not seem at all to mind the uproar, and clinging to him, in some bewilderment, father and daughter were safely piloted through the press and seated at a table halfway down the dining hall, which seemed for all the world, in that place, like a little island in a seething sea.

Dorothy found herself seated between a rather young and sprightly woman on her left, and a heavy-jowled, coarse-featured man, of perhaps thirty-five. Bornheim was seated immediately to

the right of this individual, while Mr. Markham had a position still farther down the board, for by the time the three arrived at the table no two adjoining seats were vacant. There were, in all, ten persons at the table.

And then Dorothy was suddenly conscious that Mr. Bornheim was introducing herself and father to the others.

"Oh," said the sprightly young woman, in a sufficiently impressed tone, "your father's the big steel manufacturer."

Dorothy frowned. Why hadn't the creature the decency to let her alone; to let them take their places in the new social order quietly and without notice, instead of dragging their misfortune into the light of vulgar curiosity and compassion? Yet she must answer. She already understood their new situation well enough to recognize that to show resentment would avail matters not at all. Resentment, or show of delicacy, here would be wholly misunderstood. She must answer.

"Was, you mean, don't you?" said Dorothy good-naturedly.

"Oh, of course," replied the sprightly one. Her name was Twesdem. "Really, I don't see how you can submit to so great a change. I'm an aristocrat at heart myself,—really, I am. The people here, you know, are so common. Why, they're just jammed together, ex-millionaires, and politicians, and factory girls, yes, and laboring men; think of that! My husband is in public office, but I don't like things at all now, and so I tell him, and everybody else, too, for that matter. He used to be manager in a big engraving plant,—Ewell and Rockington—you've heard of them, no doubt. And his salary was twice what it is now. It's just dreadful, too, to think what's happened to all those men that worked there. They've been thrown out of their regular line of work. There are no more engravings to be made for catalogues, or magazines, or newspapers, and they have to turn their hands to the building of roads, or even to digging up the streets. And

they don't get any more wages than when each one of them had at least a chance to be in the upper set."

Mrs. Twesdem sighed reflectively, turning her vivacious eyes, and good-natured, but rather weak face, toward Dorothy.

"I like intellectual people, don't you?" she ran on. "I'm quite interested in that new universal language, Irgot. They say it's really going to be a success, too. They used to study Espanola, but they tell me that that was never any good, anyway. And I'm a regular hero-worshiper. I love great men. But do you know, I think all great men immoral? Yet you can forgive them for that, can't you?"

And so she ran on with her chatter, which, to Dorothy's abstracted mind, presently became only a subconscious jingle of words.

Then suddenly her mind was brought back to its surroundings. Who's name had been mentioned? Seebar's? To Dorothy's ears Mrs. Twesdem's words were chatter no longer; no

longer they jingled; they rang, and her heart beat rapidly as she listened.

"And were you at the great Convention? Oh, it was wonderful to hear the speakers. And then one man got up. He was only a delegate, Alfred Seebar. He stood there, so big and handsome and impressive, and when he opened his lips his words seemed to boom out away over the hall, yet they were not loud or harsh. And then he grew impassioned, and how his splendid eyes flashed. He held them all, too, so quiet and hushed, till he sat down. Then how they did shout. I thought the very walls of the hall would burst with the sound."

Dorothy was looking in surprise at Mrs. Twesdem. The latter's eyes were shining, her cheeks were flushed, and she appeared surprisingly pretty and animated. The words had thrilled Dorothy, though she recognized that the speech was an artificially prepared product, and probably not her own.

Bornheim's handsome and slightly sensuous

face was beaming as he leaned forward. "Mighty well done, Mrs. Twesdem, mighty well done," he complimented. "Seebar would have reason to congratulate himself could he but hear you. But I'll tell him, I'll tell him."

The heavy-jowled individual to the right of Dorothy—Edgar Jeppels—who was holding his spoon in a firm, determined grasp, while he scraped the bottom of his dish of peas with great strokes, alternating with gobbling gulps, now broke in. "Seebar would be all right if he wasn't such a blamed snob. Why——"

But Bornheim had reached his ankle with a swinging blow of his foot.

"Hell!" exclaimed Jeppels, sullenly. "Beg pardon, ladies, but he kicked me just now blamed hard. It's so. I don't mean no harm to nobody, but it's so. Seebar's a blamed conceited cad. Why, he's a regular dyed-in-the-moss aristocrat. You remember that night, Hank," turning to Bornheim, "we was up in the Chamber of Trade Building, the way he treated me, and you

too, for that matter. He's just nothing but a blamed, caddish snob."

Bornheim cast imploring eyes—eyes that beseeched forgiveness—toward Dorothy. He failed to notice that she was not at all offended, only quietly amused.

"Come, come, Jeppels," he said sharply, "remember this isn't your constituency in the First Ward you're with now."

The ex-alderman was a bit ashamed. "Oh, well, Hank," he began.

Dorothy had turned to him. "You seem to have strong likes and dislikes, have you not, Mr. Jeppels?" she asked.

"Why, no stronger than other people, maybe." He was evidently flattered by Dorothy's attention. "But I'm honest, I am; I say what I think. Even when I was in the polit game, I always handed it straight to the boys. I don't pretend to like a thing I don't like. I like what I like, and I say so. I hate what I hate, and I say so, that's me."

For the moment all this was amusing enough, now that her first distress was over. But as Dorothy looked about the table and saw the frivolous, insentient faces there, heard the noise in the room, the loud talking over inconsequential things, and remembered that among such people, in just such surroundings her life henceforth was to be passed, her heart sank heavily once more within her.

Aside from Mrs. Twesdem's outburst of enthusiasm over Seebar, and the little side-play with the ex-alderman, Jeppels, the lunch hour was a painful time, indeed, and Dorothy was glad when they were through and she and her father once more were alone in the privacy of their apartment.

CHAPTER VIII

AN ATTEMPT AT RECONCILIATION

WHILE during the many months past, since that night in the library, Seebar's love for Dorothy had not lessened, thought of her had ceased to bring that keen, poignant regret that at times had come to him in the lull of his political activities.

He had been able to think of her,—not without pain, it is true,—but with the pain robbed of much of its sharpness. Hope aided him somewhat in this, but all unaware that such was the case, Seebar was gradually becoming reconciled to the loss of Dorothy.

Then he had seen her again—seen her in her grief and in her courage. At the station, whither he had conveyed her and her father, she had rebuffed his attempts to say good-by. After that first accusing glance, when she had raised her

head from her father's shoulder, she had no more deigned to notice him than if he had been a porter—had not deigned to notice him even as much.

Great as he believed his love for Dorothy to be, Seebar did not fully realize, till he turned from the station that morning, the tremendous void that had come into his life. All his slumbering passion for her returned with overwhelming force. He would not, could not, let her go thus.

Dorothy's attitude had aroused in him all his fighting blood. Mingled with his sense of loss there was a feeling of resentment. He determined to beat down her opposition, and carry her love by storm, as he would carry a crowd with eloquence from the platform.

As a result of this resolution, the second night after their arrival at the Pelion, on returning from dinner, Dorothy found Seebar awaiting her in the hall outside the apartment occupied by herself and father.

As the girl stepped from the elevator she saw

Seebar. One glance, and she was hurrying by him.

But he stepped directly in front of her.

"Dorothy." It was almost a command. Then more gently, he repeated, "Dorothy."

"Well?" she asked.

Her cheek had flushed, and her breathing came quick. As he looked down into her eyes he read defiance there.

"I must speak with you for a moment, Dorothy."

But she broke in upon his words. "It is no use, no use at all, Mr. Seebar. Please let me go."

"You are unjust," he replied; "unjust to yourself, unjust to me, in not listening to what I have to say."

"What can you have to say that is new? Things have not improved. They are only worse —more miserable than ever before."

She would have passed him, but he laid a detaining hand upon her arm.

Indignation rushed into her eyes. "You can-

not coerce me in this fashion. I will not talk with you," she exclaimed angrily.

He dropped his hand, fixing her with a steady and earnest look. "You are a child," he retorted; "a mere child—afraid to listen lest you be convinced against your whim. Your pride is hurt because I refused to give up my ambition at your wish; because I have held my ideals—whether the ideals are right or wrong has nothing to do with the question;—in the face of your protest. You told me that night in your father's library that for a woman's love a man should sacrifice even his honor. You are not a woman, but a child, and as such I must be forced to consider you.

"In spite of your silly, rebellious mood, you are going to listen to what I have to say—and you are going to listen quietly and seriously."

Dorothy stared. No one had ever talked to her like this before, certainly not Seebar. There was little of anger in his voice. His tones were cold and masterful.

And as he saw defiance give way to bewilderment, Seebar felt that if he had adopted his present attitude many months back instead of trying to reason, to plead, with her, their alienation would not have been possible.

There came a pause during which he still quietly watched her. Then all at once her eyes dropped beneath his gaze, and she drew in a deep breath.

"Yes," she said, very low, and the manner of her saying it implied even more than the word, submission to his will.

Seebar's heart leaped; with her eyes drooping and her head bent, she seemed very beautiful to him in her apparent surrender.

But, even as he rejoiced, Fate played him a trick.

Behind them footsteps sounded, coming up the hall, and he turned to discover that the intruders were Mr. Markham and Bornheim.

The latter scarcely allowed the pause that followed to grow awkward. He grasped Seebar's

hand and shook it with all the warmth and enthusiasm of a very dear friend.

"So, old man," he said quite heartily, "you've condescended to reappear among us terrestrials once more."

"I came to see Miss Markham—and Mr. Markham," Seebar rejoined shortly.

"Mr. Seebar," said Mr. Markham, "I cannot say that I am pleased to see you. However, if there is anything I can do——"

He did not finish, but led the way into his apartment.

"I think we shall be quite secluded and private here," he continued, conducting Seebar into a small room that opened from the larger one they had first entered.

He closed the door upon Bornheim and Dorothy in the outer room. "Now, what is it, Mr. Seebar?" he asked.

Seebar bit his lip with vexation, but checked any manifestation in words of the irritation that possessed him.

"Mr. Markham, there is just one thing I wish; that is, to be left alone with your daughter. I had almost effected a reconciliation, I believe, when we were interrupted."

The ex-steel magnate frowned. "Dorothy is free in the matter," he answered. "She can do as she pleases. She knows what my wishes are, however."

"And yet you have no reluctance in having her make the acquaintance of another Socialist leader," Seebar retorted.

"Bornheim, of course you mean," Mr. Markham returned composedly. "But that is different."

"And why, pray?"

"Well, it is not so much to the Socialistic principles I object, but to the lack of sincerity of those holding them."

"And Bornheim, you believe, is honestly a Socialist?"

"That's it, exactly."

"And you still believe that I am not?"

"I still hold to that opinion."

"Well, I shall take you at your word of a moment ago and try once more to speak with Dorothy."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Markham.

Seebar rose from his chair. Mr. Markham walked to the door and threw it open. "Dorothy," he said, "Mr. Seebar would like to speak with you alone. You know my wishes in the matter."

There was an interval, really quite brief, but to Seebar, waiting in the little room, of long duration. Finally she spoke.

"Yes," her voice sounded cool and even, "but tell him I do not wish to see him."

"Anything more, Mr. Seebar?" Mr. Markham inquired, not unkindly.

Seebar was fighting the horrible chill that had seized his heart. With an effort he mastered his despair.

"Yes," he responded. "If you can do nothing for me, perhaps I can do something for you."

He paused.

Mr. Markham's eyes were fixed expectantly upon him.

"Well?" he asked at length.

"Mr. Markham, I was frank with you once before on this same subject. I will be frank with you again. I asked you, if the Great Change came about, what you were going to do. It has come about, and I again ask you what you expect to do to live."

"I don't know," answered Mr. Markham very slowly. "I am expecting the official notice daily. I suppose I shall have to do clerical work of some sort."

"If you would but let me, I could assist you very much, I could indeed." Seebar was all earnestness. "I have influence——"

Mr. Markham interrupted him. "Perhaps you have," he retorted, "and it might have been advisable to have used it sooner yesterday than you did. However, don't think me ungrateful," he presently added. "I know you saved me from

considerable additional insult yesterday. But I feel that I can accept nothing from you."

"I am sorry, very sorry," said Seebar. And he meant it.

"I am sorry, too," replied Mr. Markham, with an apparently equal sincerity.

CHAPTER IX

SEEBAR MEETS WITH AN ACQUAINTANCE

AS Seebar passed out into the glare of the streets, never had his spirits been lower, his heart more heavy. So long as the only rival in his love had been his political doctrines, the breach between him and Dorothy had not seemed so hopeless of mending. But now this new factor—Bornheim—entering into the situation, had utterly upset his calculations.

He knew Bornheim to be at times quite pleasing, even fascinating. A frankly avowed voluptuary among men, with women he could be refined, and, certainly, ingratiatingly deferential and gallant. The coarser fibre, which he could skilfully veneer when he wished, though usually palpable enough to men, to women showed through as strong, masterful manhood. And

Seebar could see no reason why Dorothy, sheltered and protected since birth from the harsher phases of life, should be able rightly to read the character of such a man. Even men of the world might be deceived in this crafty politician and roué when he wished to mask his true nature.

Mr. Markham, too, had evidently been misled by his suave pretensions, for, to all appearances, the man had been unreservedly accepted as a friend by the former steel manufacturer. Seebar remembered how, in the old days, Dorothy's father had been exactingly careful with reference to the character of the men with whom she associated. How had Bornheim managed so quickly to break down the old man's native caution?

In asking himself this question, Seebar did not take into consideration the fact that change of circumstances might have affected Mr. Markham's decision in this matter. That father and daughter, friendless, for the time being at least, should find, in Bornheim, a guide and protector,

did not occur to him. Nor, of course, did he suspect the part his telegram—gone astray—to Lessing, had played in establishing this confidence, and that Bornheim's position with the Markhams was, after all, in reality an indorsement by them of their unexpressed faith in his own integrity.

Understanding nothing of this, as he plunged along against the wind, head bent low, eyes unseeing, a despairing anger burned in his heart that his absence seemed to be compensated for by this other man.

In his course, instinctively he fled from the lights and noise of the streets. His steps led him across the quarter-mile of park that separated the boulevard from the shores of Lake Michigan. The balminess of the atmosphere, unusual for so early in the year, which had prevailed for the several weeks past, had vanished before a cold, penetrating wind out of the northwest.

For some time Seebar thus walked on, fol-

lowing the shore-line, while at his right the waters tumbled and boomed. Then, as the chill of the night penetrated to his skin, abating the fever of body but not of mind, he turned his back on the wild dark lake, where the waves, breaking against the sea wall, hissed in a foam-spitting shower.

By the time he had regained the boulevard he was trembling with cold. Still he would not take shelter, for the fire within his mind would not permit ease of body. Besides, the wind did not here have the bold broad sweep it had on the lake front.

Once he stopped. This was in front of the Café Berton, where, in the old days, he had often dined with Dorothy after the play. He had half-turned into the broad corridor before he realized that unconsciously his steps were leading him to a place of old associations. The place, with its fine stone carved front, and glare of lights through richly stained glass, for the moment seemed unbearable.

Here it was that he had given Dorothy her engagement ring. He had seated her in a quiet corner of the dining room, himself at her left. He recalled how, beneath the table, his own hand trembling so that he feared he would drop the ring, he had slipped the narrow band upon her finger, and how she had first blushed and then paled, and, finally, looking down at the stone glittering its various tints underneath the bright lights, she had half-met and then dropped her eyes before his gaze.

As the contrast of the present came fully home to him, he set his teeth as if to crush his despair, and turned once more to fight his way against the wind, welcoming its fierce buffetings as something his still fiercer anguish could beat itself against.

At last, half-exhausted and thoroughly chilled, he did turn into a sheltering doorway, and found himself within the corridor of the Ajax, one of the many hundreds of municipal hotels that housed Chicago's citizens.

He had taken but a few steps down the passage-way, when he was accosted by a young man, who extended his hand in greeting. In the square-built figure, frank blue eyes, open countenance, Seebar recognized the furniture mover who had struck down the bully who had tormented Mr. Markham.

His name was John Edgeington.

Seebar was genuinely glad to meet him once more. Here was a link, remote it is true, but nevertheless a link, serving to bring him in touch, in a way, with the Markhams.

It was from this man that Seebar got another picture of the workings of the new régime, that hitherto he had not seen.

Edgeington had invited Seebar to his apartments, and the overseer of Chicago had accepted the invitation.

"You won't find things here just the same as you would in your own quarters, I expect," said Edgeington, half-apologetically, as they entered the apartment. "We have only three

rooms. It's rather crowded for so many—my wife, two children, and myself."

"You don't mean——" Seebar began; then recalled the numerous complaints that had been coming into his department of the inadequate quarters that the municipal authorities were assigning to many families. Up to the present, however, he had not had a concrete case thus directly brought to his attention.

"Oh, yes, I do," replied Edgeington, smiling slightly.

"Why, I didn't realize——" Seebar began again. Then as he recalled rumors of "pull," once more he grew silent. How different his own quarters were at the Alexius; and he had certainly used his influence to have certain rooms assigned to old-time friends.

"If you'll sit down," suggested Edgeington, "I'll call my wife and babies."

The room into which Seebar had been brought was almost painfully bare. The walls were rough finished. Cracks gashed the plaster. The

furniture was cheap-made and scanty. The Ajax was one of those office buildings that had been hastily remodeled to meet the exigencies of Socialism for housing families.

Seebar was standing at the electric heater, which, however, failed to emit warmth, when Edgeington reappeared with his wife, a dark, slender, neatly dressed woman, and two boys, the elder not over eight years, trailing timidly behind her.

"You'll find it rather unpleasant and cold here, I know," Mrs. Edgeington said, apologizing somewhat in the same manner her husband had done. "We haven't got very much light, even. We've been dreadfully uncomfortable here all winter, and this unexpected change in the weather has, of course, taken us by surprise. We're not finding fault with the government," she hastened to explain; "my husband and I are as ardent Socialists as any, but we've felt the change so in our circumstances. The heating system seems never to have been properly in-

stalled in the building, and we did have such a pretty little home in the suburbs," she added quite wistfully.

"You see," she went on, "for one thing we haven't got our own furniture. We're supposed to have as much of our own as we need for fitting up our new homes. The surplus goes to the state. But here I am telling you things you know far more about than I."

"No, go on," Seebar urged. "You're telling me things that I have heard of, perhaps, but which I didn't exactly understand before, at least in the way you are telling me."

"Well," continued Mrs. Edgeington, re-encouraged, "we didn't get any of our own things, except some of our books. John took special care of them himself and managed to save them. But all our other little things are gone—the pictures we bought, and the little set of blue china we started housekeeping with when we were married—everything is gone that we treasured, and we can't find a trace. The order

numbers, or the tags, or something, got mixed, I suppose."

To Seebar, all this was of course quite painful, but the subject of Socialistic maladministration once started, he was determined to learn from these people all they chose to tell him.

"You haven't always been a furniture mover, have you?" he asked, turning to the husband.

"No." The answer was almost curt. "I used to be a frescoer."

"Oh, I see." The tone of which reply meant, "That occupation's about gone out." "But there's the common painting, of course. I suppose, though, you prefer the work you're in now rather than that."

"It's hardly a matter of choice, I should say," Edgeington answered somewhat gloomily; "I can't get any painting to do. There doesn't seem to be enough to go around."

There was silence for a moment. Then suddenly Edgeington burst forth. "Mr. Seebar, I'm sick of all this, sick of my surroundings, sick

of my work, sick of this Socialism. It has swept away pretty near everything that I and my wife cherished. We've lost our home, our friends, our possessions of every sort."

Edgeington, with a quick impatient shake of his head, and a frown, disapproved the slight protest his wife made with her eyes. "Jenny—my wife—had her little circle of friends, in the suburbs. She had her social affairs, her club meetings, her little parties. Not a great deal of this sort of thing, to be sure, because we are simple people, and we lived simply, but perhaps we enjoyed it all the more because we didn't have too much. Besides there were the children to look after. Now these same friends are scattered everywhere, and our little boys, also, have lost their playmates.

"It isn't just the physical discomforts, you see; it's the almost complete breaking up of our home life that's hardest of all. Yet we had visions of a bigger, broader life in the city. We thought of the art museums and galleries. I was

intensely fond of such things. Then there was the charm of change itself. I sometimes think a kind of insanity swept over this nation last fall. I don't know, I'm sure, what to think of it all. We should have been able to foretell a lot of things. Of course the Capitalists correctly prophesied events, but, then, who paid any attention to the Capitalists?"

Neither the wife nor Seebar made any attempt at interruption now, as, leaning forward in his earnestness, Edgeington went on.

"Only to-day I heard two men talking downstairs in the dining room. One of them pointed out how absurd the feeling against the wealthier classes had been, after all. 'They hadn't spent the nation's wealth,' he said. 'They had really gathered together that wealth, concentrated it, and invested it in such a way as to make good use of the nation's resources. When we shouted for Socialism, we were crying for a leveling process. We didn't so much care to raise ourselves as to lower others.' I believe he was right,

and if I had the chance to vote on the proposition again, I think I'd cast my vote against Socialism.

"I hate the men I work with, hate and despise them, vulgar uncouth brutes, who know nothing of what is best in life—the very commonest of day laborers, who take pride, it seems to me, in their very coarseness. I hate their foul talk and dirty jokes. The foreman of our gang sets the example. He's a full-necked, red-faced fellow, who chews tobacco constantly, and spits it about everywhere. It makes my blood boil to see him wantonly spit upon the finest of white satins, as he did to-day.

"I haven't had a bit of peace for the last two days—ever since that trouble at the Markhams'——" He stopped abruptly. "I'm sorry, Mr. Seebar, to have run on like this. A fine thing for a man to do to invite you here and then trouble you with conditions that are no affair of yours. I guess I'm becoming moody. I'm thinking so much of my own troubles that I'm growing mighty selfish. I'm worrying my

poor little wife to death, too, with this sort of talk. All this is hard on her, I know, far harder than it is on me."

Again he turned to Seebar. "Once more," he said, "I cannot tell you how sorry I am."

"Don't apologize," protested Seebar. "I'm glad you've spoken out as you have. There are a thousand and one things in the new system that are not perfect, and the more we learn about them the easier they will be to rectify. And, Mrs. Edgeington," he added, smiling and holding out his hand, "we'll see if by next winter you won't like the new conditions better than the old ones. For I am still convinced that Socialism, rightly administered, is the very best form of government."

His manner was so confident that, for the moment, as they bade him good-night, the Edgeingtons were almost reassured. They could not guess how far the wedge of doubt had penetrated into Seebar's thoughts.

CHAPTER X

THE DISTURBANCE NEXT DOOR; THE DINING ROOM OF THE AJAX

MRS. EDGEINGTON sat down beside her husband. "Yes," she sighed, "it does seem strange that things have changed like this in less than a year's time. I can't tell you how much I miss our little home, with the garden and the summerhouse set among the trees, and that sunny little sewing room, and the children's white bed-room. Oh, John!"

Presently she added: "But I don't care so much for myself because we've lost these things. It's for you and the children I care most, and the change in your kind of work. Only to think you should be nothing more now than a day laborer—oh, I didn't exactly mean that, I——"

But her husband would not have the phrase softened. "It's true, just an unskilled day laborer,

—a furniture mover. And it seems only yesterday, too, that I was promoted as foreman of that gang of frescoers who were decorating the interior of Mr. Markham's house; yet the other day I had to help plunder the place. I don't quite understand why everything should have gone wrong like this," he added, inclosing his wife's hand in his large strong one. "There'll be no frescoing for many a day to come. It certainly was my misfortune to be given a place as a furniture mover instead of as a painter."

"There are more painters than the government can find work for at the present time," she suggested.

"I don't know about that, dear; look at these walls. A coat of paint certainly wouldn't hurt them. I'd paint them myself, only I can't get the paint, and any way the government won't let a man do things like that.

"Well, the hours are no longer, and the pay is the same as in any other business, but that isn't saying a vast deal, is it? for wages have been

reduced all around. I'm not getting half what I got before, nor as much as I got even as a common painter. And look at the sort of surroundings I have to provide for you. When I voted for Socialism I certainly didn't vote for this."

"Come, come, dear, don't!" she pleaded.

But the dark mood was upon him, and he went on, unheeding her remonstrance. "They promised us all sorts of things, did these Socialist leaders, and what have they given us? Cold miserable quarters in place of a comfortable cottage; water too cold to take a bath in; children in bed at seven o'clock, because it's too cold for them to be about; no place for them to play. Little Eddie is growing thin and pale, and even John isn't as stout and robust as he used to be. If the proposition was before me again I'd——"

His speech was interrupted by a loud thumping on the wall and the sound of voices, excited and hurried.

"What is that?" Edgeington asked.

"It's that Italian, Pietro Cavani. He's come home intoxicated again. I'm afraid he'll hurt his wife sometime; he carries on so."

Her hand rested on her husband's shoulder, and she was looking up into his face with that peculiarly expectant look one has when listening for something to happen.

Edgeington instinctively drew his wife in closer to him.

There came a crash, followed by a muffled scream.

"I'd better go and see what it's all about. Maybe it's something serious."

She would have detained him, but he gently released himself from her hold. "Now supposing it was I that was raising a row, wouldn't you be glad if some one interfered? Of course you would!"

He was out in the hall now, with his hand on the knob of the door leading into the adjacent apartment.

All was quiet for the moment. Then a

woman's voice came through almost as distinctly as though the door were open.

"Don't, don't break that, Pietro; it's the only doll that Clara has left."

"Won't, won't—I'll break the doll, anything, you——"

This was answered by another scream.

Edgeington brought his fist against the door, a blow more than a knock.

"Here, here," he called out, "what's going on?"

There followed a moment's silence, and then the woman opened the door. Large dark eyes shone in a pale face; her heavy black locks were disheveled. "Why—why——" Her lips trembled.

Cavani tried to eye the intruder insolently, but Edgeington disregarded him. "Mrs. Cavani," he demanded, "has he been hurting you?"

She tried to frame speech once more with her trembling lips. "Not exactly," she finally enun-

ciated, "only my heart," and she burst into a flood of tears.

"But he's not to blame, indeed he's not," she presently added, her marital loyalty trying bravely to show itself.

A second knocking,—this time timid,—sounded, and Mrs. Edgeington entered.

Then the miserable story gradually was told. The story was not so unlike that of the Edgeingtons, so far as previously happy conditions and prosperity were concerned. Cavani had kept a small fruit store, and was as joyful as any man over the outcome of the elections. "No more long hours waiting for trade," he had said. "Short hours without heavy work, lots of going out, lots of play. We've worked too hard, now let's enjoy ourselves."

She readily convinced her sympathetic listeners that indeed they had worked hard, building up their little business. It had been slow work. Pietro had pushed his cart. Later, he had money enough for a small booth under the outside steps

of a building. Finally, he had moved into a shop. Now everything was gone.

"Our little home, our little store—all gone, gone," concluded Mrs. Cavani. "And Pietro has changed so much; but can you blame him," she challenged in unflinching loyalty, "working all day unpacking fruit, starting life all over again, and with nothing ahead—nothing ahead"—she repeated the words as if almost horror-struck, their full meaning seeming to affect her at that moment with peculiar significance.

She looked down at her husband, who by this time was stretched full length on the sofa, snoring peacefully.

She heaved a deep sigh as much as to say, "Well, he's quiet at last."

Back in their own apartments, Edgeington and his wife were silent for a little.

"Do you remember, dear," he said, speaking at last, "how we, too, struggled along to buy our little place? How you gave up all thoughts

of a new hat at Easter that we might hurry the payments?"

"And how you made your overcoat last another winter?"

"Yes, and how you and the boys grew vegetables in the garden to lessen the cost for groceries?"

"And how you used to spade in the evenings, and on Saturday afternoons; and don't you remember when you frescoed the parlor Kitty fell into the paint?"

Edgeington looked down at his wife, whose eyes were shining and lips smiling. He recalled the quiet summer evenings on the side porch—they had lived beyond the zone of brilliant light—the buzz of beetles in the dusk, the bumping of these same stupid beetles against the screens in the windows. He could even smell the warm scent of the earth, mingled with the more subtle odor of flowers.

Then he looked about the cold, cheerless room, devoid of suitable furnishings, at the ugly, rough,

unpainted walls, heard the cough of little Edward in the next room, and his heart sickened at the change in their affairs.

"Little wife," he said sadly, "I must have been mad, plumb mad, to think of changing the life we led for any other on earth. Why, my lot was happier than that of any millionaire."

Edgeington awoke the next morning with a heavy heart. Little Edward's cough, which had been distressing the little fellow several days, was much better, but the depressing influences among which he had lived were gradually taking away his old-time blithe cheerfulness.

So consistent had he been with the principles of his party that, at the time of its triumph, he had not hesitated to be among the first to turn his property over to the state, even before the official demand had been made.

He had regretted, as much as did any man under the circumstances, the necessity of abandoning his home in the suburbs. This regret had

been intensified ever since November, when he had moved his family into the Ajax, where they had since dwelt amidst its noise, suffering not only its inconveniences, but its quite positive discomforts.

In the morning light his wife looked far from well. Her eyes, encircled by the marks of worry and fatigue, burned in pale cheeks.

"I can't go down to breakfast with you this morning," she said; "I must look after the children.

And looking down into her anxious eyes, Edgeington found his conscience smote him as though he were responsible for it all.

As he took his place in the large dining room, the monotony and cheerlessness of the big place, combined with his anxiety for the boy's welfare and the recollection of his wife's weariness, depressed him unspeakably, and he grew heartsick for the snug little cottage in the suburbs.

A half-dozen other men were seated at the table with him.

"Hello, Edgeington," said the person seated opposite him, of a stout build, with greasy face and very ill-kept hands, "you seem to have a grouch on this morning."

It was the same old story, the same old experience. It was maddening: to eat with those who noticed if one were quiet or merry, and to have one's moods made a jest of. The only way to escape this was to divert questions by asking others.

"You're early this morning," suggested Edgeington.

"Oh, I'm going to have some sport to-day. I'm going out to a shooting match. I'm going to work early this morning. Three hours a day, you know, is all we can stand in the rendering tanks at the stockyards. At least that's what the government says. Same wages as you, too, and you work six hours a day. Say, those fellows who took clean work are blamed fools, that's what they are. Now, I had sense enough to stick to my trade. Tending to by-products has always

been my trade. Lots of my friends thought they'd quit. The more fools, them! Preferred six hours a day heaving up concrete to nice quiet work cleaning out rendering vats. Why, don't you remember they said at first there was lots of work too dirty for any man to do—unhealthy, they said. Pshaw! Wouldn't hurt any one that's robust like me, nor lots of others, neither. Lots of men have come to this three-hour job, who never did work afore with their pretty hands, and they're all growing fat on it. Remember when we Socialists used to say this work was too disgusting for any man to do? Oh, Lord!"

And the man guffawed, half choking, and then smacked his lips, as he bent his head over the table and greedily helped himself to more food.

Edgeington hurried through his breakfast. This sort of man had, by 1953, almost passed out of the skilled trades. This man eating away so bestially, seemed an anachronism. Still, it

was surprising, with one's choice of associates practically eliminated, what a surprisingly large number of peculiarly unpleasant persons rubbed elbows with one everywhere, in the most intimate way.

A harsh-featured woman, with unkempt hair, sat down at that moment next to Edgeington. Picking up her napkin, she ran it over the plate; then proceeded to wipe knife and fork with the cloth.

"See here," she called sharply, to the waiter.

At first he openly disregarded her, but as she insistently raised her voice, he reluctantly was forced to heed her call.

"Well, what is it?" he snapped.

"The plates and things are not clean," the woman protested, holding up the napkin, grimy from its recent service.

"I can't help it. What do you people expect? If you don't like it you can go and kick to some one in the kitchen. The girls'll most likely throw you out, though, if you do," he added, grinning

impudently. "They're on to you. They know you're the worst trouble maker we've got. That's why your things are so dirty, if you want to know."

"I'll report you," the woman blustered.

"Report? Oh, yes," he yawned. "Who'll you report to? You can't come that over me. The super stands in well with the boss. He knows enough not to monkey with his constituents, he does."

"Come, come," protested Edgeington, "why can't you be half-civil, anyway?"

"Ah, what are you talking about? I'm civil enough if people will only let me alone."

But Edgeington saw it was useless to try to interfere here.

Certainly this day had had a bad beginning. He did not relish the thought of the work before him. This business of driving about from place to place in vans, seizing furniture and ousting tenants in spite of their protests, was not the sort of thing he had bargained would be a part

of his duties. With misery everywhere, neither at work nor away from it could he find happiness.

He was more depressed, more sick at heart, more uncertain as to the future of himself and family than ever he had been in the days of "wage slavery." He was finding the state far more of an oppressor than ever he had found any private employer.

CHAPTER XI

THE RED CARD

ON the very next morning—the morning following Seebar's call—the official notice that required Faverall Markham to report at the Government Employment Bureau to have his position as a "productive citizen," assigned to him, came. It was a square, red envelope, stiff and hard, that was delivered into his hands.

His fingers trembled as they fumbled in a futile attempt to tear the tough paper. He was obliged finally to use his pocket knife. It was strange—so he himself thought—that he should be agitated thus, for he knew just what were the contents. The card, official summons to labor, was also stiff and red—red to denote the universal brotherhood of man.

With a sigh, he dropped the card on the table, and turned to gaze at himself in the glass. He

saw there a pair of strong, gray eyes—bearing a defiant look,—as if at bay,—shadowed by gray brows. The head was tossed back.

Himself scarcely conscious of the fact, he was meeting fortune in his customary determined, self-reliant way. He had no regrets for his peremptory refusal of Seebar's offer of assistance. He sought not, neither would he accept, pity or favors.

But he was glad that Dorothy was not present just then. He did not wish to be softened. His heart and will were hard and stern, and he was thankful for it.

Carefully, as carefully as if he were about to preside at a directors' meeting, he arranged his toilet. Thrusting the red card into his pocket, he set his silk hat upon his head, and, as a finishing touch, flicked away a bit of dust hitherto overlooked. Then he descended to the street.

One could not be wholly unhappy that day. The spring atmosphere lay upon the city, soft and buoyant. The sun was beating in a mild

warmth upon the pavements, the streets were alive with people—that holiday throng which at first had been a marvel to Faverall Markham too, as well as to Dorothy, so startling had been the contrast with the city of what seemed but yesterday. And still everywhere men were at work upon the buildings, while the pavements and gutters were littered with materials. It was as if all these sky-piercers had been erected simultaneously and the finishing touches were now being put upon them.

It was a ten-minute walk to the Employment Bureau and in his interest in the scenes of the street Mr. Markham had almost forgotten his relation to the world of easy bustle around him. For the time being he was as an alien viewing a strange land. And then suddenly a section of the government buildings loomed up before him, and he had passed between the big swinging doors into the corridor.

Instantly the cheer of the morning fell from him. The air was stale and heavy, and the yel-

low sullen glow of artificial light took the place of the light of the sun.

The offices of the Government Employment Bureau were on the third floor. He entered the elevator with a step that had lost the buoyancy of a few moments ago.

As Mr. Markham opened the door of the reception room, he was surprised at the large number of people there, evidently on the same mission with himself. The benches and chairs were filled with men and women, and a host of others found standing room against the walls. There must have been some two hundred and fifty ahead of his turn.

Behind a breast-high partition—that ran the length of the room,—broken here and there to make place for a swinging gate, stood a dozen government clerks attending to the wants of the visitors.

Mr. Markham presently discovered that the great majority were not there in answer to a summons to "productive labor," but that they

were desirous of changing their particular kind or place of employment.

It was not at all an anxious looking crowd. Here, too, the holiday atmosphere prevailed. None of the nervous toying with pencils, or beating of fingers, or moistening of lips, or eager scanning of the "want ad." columns such as Mr. Markham might have observed in employment bureau offices not so long ago. There was a peace, a tranquillity, in the manner and on the faces of men and women, that, speaking well as it did for their trust in the new system, should have been alarming rather than reassuring. They were too satisfied, even in their discontent. They were too manifestly throwing individual troubles upon the state in a lump. No man's troubles were his own. He felt that they were the state's.

"So I said to the boss," one man was remarking confidentially to the clerk and to all others within a range of twenty feet, who cared to listen, "'Now, look here, old man, we elected you

superintendent because we thought you was a good fellow and considerate, and not likely to put on airs, and here you go ordering me to shift them bolts as though I was a nigger under a contract boss. I get my time right here,' I says, and I did, too."

"Number 185," called the clerk, and then Mr. Markham suddenly realized that he had not secured a number.

"Down there," answered one of those who were waiting, in response to his question, pointing to a uniformed individual lounging near the door.

"Here, my man, you didn't give me a ticket," Mr. Markham protested. A score or more of persons had since followed his entrance.

"Well, why didn't you ask for one? I ain't supposed to chase you fellows around handing out tickets," and the man, with middle finger and thumb, shot a card across the desk upon the floor.

The flush that swept over the old man's face

was not due entirely to the efforts of picking up the bit of cardboard.

As he straightened up again the official smiled half-insolently. "Card got away from you that time, eh, governor?"

The flush on Mr. Markham's face deepened as he turned away.

The world had indeed changed, changed incredibly in the past few months. Such little stings seemed to hurt him more than the more vital results of the Great Change itself.

In spite of the leisurely, time-taking service of the clerks, his number was called at last, and he presented the red card he had received in the mail that morning.

A blank was presented him to fill out. It was a huge sheet of paper containing a multitude of questions to be answered. There was a line for his age, his residence, whether single or married, his past occupation, what the income had been, what occupation the applicant wished to take up now, etc., etc.

"As to the occupation I wish to take up now, that is beyond me to state," said Mr. Markham, appealing to the clerk. "Manager of a department, or even of one of the workshops of one of the Western Steel Mills, is, I suppose, out of the question."

"Why, yes, all such offices are elective now. You were employed there once?"

"Yes, once."

And then the clerk, looking once more at the name written on the question blank, glanced back to Mr. Markham.

"I think, Mr. Markham," he began in a gently suggestive tone, "that you had better apply for a clerkship in the office."

"I see no other way, myself." And Mr. Markham picked up the pen and wrote opposite the question—"Position now wanted," the words, "Clerk in the Western Steel Mills." Just above was the question, "former occupation," and the answer, "Manufacturer, owner of the Western Steel Mills."

In some subtle way the information had reached the waiting throng that the gray-haired man turning from the desk to the door was Faverall Markham, the famous steel manufacturer.

Some one said in a loud, penetrating whisper, "I'm glad I never was a millionaire."

Some one laughed in answer.

And then the subject of their comment, with an aching bitterness in his heart, closed the door, with a feeling of relief, upon the vulgar curiosity, and pity as vulgar, of those within.

CHAPTER XII

MR. MARKHAM GOES TO THE STEEL MILLS AND DOROTHY FINDS EMPLOYMENT

THE Western Steel Mills were south of Chicago, beyond the corporate limits of the city. By day they showed in the distance; a great line of smoke-stacks against the sky-line, with a huge cloud of murky vapors,—of their own creation—ever streaming lakeward or inland as the breezes chanced to blow. At night the clouds above them flashed like heat lightning, as from time to time flame shot up and quivered.

It was a strange, mysterious world of itself, regarded with awe by those afar off, by those who dwelt immediately at hand as a means of livelihood.

On the eve of the Great Change, secret processes were still employed in the manufacture

of certain grades of steel, and all parts of the huge plant were not open to the inspection of the public. But most of the evils of the old days had passed away—the scalding of men in converters of molten metal, the terrible burns and scars, from contact with white-hot metal—the blindness from flying drops of liquid steel, or burning chips of the "frozen" metal. These legends still persisted, though for over twenty years the most effective safeguards had been provided,—new devices had been invented, and, according to those who professed to know, a man was scarcely able to receive an injury, unless with wanton intent of himself or another.

In addition to the manufacture of steel itself, implements of various sorts also were made here.

In connection with these industries a business office was of course essential. Even under the Socialist régime, in addition to the workers engaged in the actual and immediate production of the goods themselves, a force, merely clerical, was necessary for their distribution.

In these offices it was, then, that Faverall Markham had applied for and secured employment.

How strange it all seemed to him—yet how familiar, too—the first morning he approached the steel plant in the capacity of a mere employee, instead of chief stockholder and president. It was near nine o'clock, an hour later than the men had come to work not yet a year back. Already the working day had shrunk an hour. The thousands of workers were arriving, bearing down upon the hundred entrances in a vast, loose, disorganized army. No dinner pails glistened in the morning sun. The state furnished all employees their noon-day lunch.

But a few rods away, Lake Michigan rolled eastward in a green flood. The waves leaped and flashed under the morning sun. In the harbor lay half a dozen of the long black craft that, ore-laden, could make their fifty miles an hour.

The huge buildings sprawled in a mighty cluster, their buttresses and angles and projections

like so many ill-formed and warped but powerful muscles of a myriad-bodied monster. For all this the blue sky formed a background showing between the stacks, which resembled nothing so much as a row of huge, ugly fingers outstretched.

Strange all this seemed to Faverall Markham now—as strange as it had seemed to him when, a boy, he had first looked upon the Western Steel Mills. He was but fourteen then, a scared, shrinking youngster, with his little shiny dinner pail clutched tight in his fist. His father had died but recently before that, and he had been called upon to help support his mother and sisters.

He recalled how he had come as early as seven o'clock and had stood outside the silent mills, in the deserted street. He had tried timidly first one door and then another, but had found all locked. Then he had sat down to wait in the sun, filtering the coke from the flooring of the yards nervously between his fingers. Suddenly the streets had been alive with the voices and feet of

men, and then had come the rushing, jogging throng,—half-running, and he had been swept, hardly more than a child, through the gates and into the works.

Now, over forty years later, the act of his boyhood was being repeated. Few men would care to live their lives over a second time in the way once lived. The zest of living seems to be in the possibilities of the future.

As this morning Faverall Markham repeated the act of nearly half a century back, the terrible reality of his situation came home to him. Again he was swept in through the gates, dazed this time, not from the bewilderment of the unknown, but by too close and too intent recognition of the familiar.

In the general coat room on the second floor, connected with the offices, he hung up his hat like any other employee. In this same building only eight months before he had presided at a directors' meeting. That was at the time of the semi-annual visit and inspection by these officials.

Now he was a mere clerk, of far less importance than any of the superintendents who then had reported to him. Indeed, as he presently learned, few of these old superintendents had retained their positions. A vote of the employees had swept them away.

In the department in which Faverall Markham found himself placed, a young fellow, perhaps twenty-seven years of age, named McDurgen, was foreman. His hair was red, neatly parted in the middle, and coming down over his forehead in a sort of curl on either side. That was the first thing Mr. Markham observed about the man. It was the first thing any one observed about him. Indeed, those two wisps of reddish hair stood out on his pale forehead like horns of fire.

But this feature was presently obscured by another one, more pronounced, more insistent, even, if not at first so conspicuous. This was his overbearing insolence. His eyes lighted up at the name on the application card that was presented him.

"Humph," he said, picking up the card, "do you think you can do the work?" He blew on the edge with a sharp whistling sound while he eyed the man before him in a domineering fashion.

"Young man," replied Mr. Markham, sharply, "I created this department."

"Oh, yes, I know that,——" McDurgen began to interrupt with impatient assurance, but Mr. Markham went on:

"Neither am I accustomed to being treated superciliously by underbred young upstarts."

McDurgen's eyes fell before the stern gaze of the old man. He let the latter pass to his desk without further word. Yet there was a look in his eyes, when he once more raised them, that presaged trouble.

There had grown up in the Western Steel Mills a complicated system with reference to delays or errors in the shipment of goods. When the data were incomplete and a letter asking for particulars had been mailed the complainant, all neces-

sary papers were filed for a period of from five to fifteen days. The correspondence would be marked, " Casket 5 days," " Casket 10 days," etc., at the end of which time these data would automatically be produced. Some abuses, due to indolence and inefficiency on the part of the employees, had crept in. Cases that should have been disposed of at once were often consigned to the casket.

With the coming of the Socialistic régime these abuses ran riot, and though there were not so many cases to handle as in the old days, the caskets were filled with neglected ones. Moreover, though the office force had been considerably augmented, little work was done. A man could hardly be discharged. The government had to find work for every individual, deserving or otherwise.

Though ownership of the plant had passed absolutely out of his hands, probably forever; though the failure of the Socialist system tended to his advantage, the reckless, inefficient methods

of handling the business of the department grated upon Faverall Markham's business ideals.

He brought the matter to McDurgen's attention.

"Oh," said McDurgen smoothly, "so you're determined to find fault with our Socialist ways of doing things, are you? I thought you Capitalists wouldn't keep quiet long without poking your fingers about trying to discredit the new system. No, sir," he continued, raising his voice so that the men at the desks all around them could hear, "I'll listen to no charges against any man here. If you don't like the fellows here tell them so, or get out. It's none of my business what your relations are to the others here."

Mr. Markham drew back, incredulity and indignation in his eyes.

"But I am making no charges against any one," he said; "I merely suggested——"

"Keep your suggestions to yourself. I want nothing from you."

And the young man went on writing one of

the private letters he spent much of his time in composing.

The veins swelled in Mr. Markham's forehead. His lips tightened and his fists clenched.

McDurgen had turned the situation, turned it cleverly. Mr. Markham could not help but admit that. He had made it appear to all that he had lodged some sort of a complaint against one, if not more, of the men. What McDurgen's purpose was in doing this he could not imagine. It showed him one fact, however, and a fact indeed most startling—that the government had every man who might be considered its enemy, at its mercy. A man could not be thrown out of employment, but life could be made unendurable.

As Faverall Markham realized this, the anger died slowly out, leaving his face a bit old and tired. Silently he resumed his seat at his desk, and it was with a trembling hand that he continued at his work.

There have been practised innumerable methods of persecution,—some rough, some subtle,—since

the world began. The rougher methods often merely irritate and render defiant the victims. The finer methods insinuate themselves into the soul and slowly eat the core away.

McDurgen in dealing with Mr. Markham now adopted the latter method, in contrast with the more open hostility of the men. The adjusting office of the Western Steel Works now became to the old man a living hell. Toward Faverall Markham, McDurgen assumed a mock respect and pity that in reality bordered on insolence to the point of driving one mad. He professed to consult the ex-owner on various points, asked his advice on this and that, and in short, brought home to him constantly the great gulf between his past and present life. And then, when he felt he had scored a point, McDurgen would shut his thin lips down upon his large teeth in a suppressed grin as his eyes wandered for approval over his constituents.

The policy of the men was different. The majority of them left the ex-steel magnate

severely alone. It was the silence of contempt—contempt for one who they believed had spoken against them. There were several of the jackal pack, however, who could not resist the opportunity to bait the fallen lion. This they did by the exchange between themselves of broad, jovial remarks. And one young fool used to leer in his face with a facetious gesture whenever he passed the desk of the old man.

Though he said nothing of all this to Dorothy, she quickly discerned that some heavy cloud lay upon him. She made no comment, however, for some time. Then one afternoon as he came home unusually pale and heavy-eyed, she could no longer forego questioning him.

"Nothing, nothing at all is the matter, dear," Mr. Markham hastily answered, kissing her again and again in his desire to stifle further interrogation.

Seeing that she only pained and embarrassed him, she pressed the matter no further. Instead, she introduced a new subject. "What do you

think, daddy dear," she went on, her blue eyes warming with a happy light, "I'm going to work, too."

Mr. Markham turned still whiter. He saw a picture of his child, always protected and guarded like a delicate plant, thrown into some such heartless atmosphere as he himself was compelled to endure. The very thought of it wrung his soul with anguish.

"Oh, Dorothy, I cannot let you go to work," he exclaimed at last.

She was perplexed. "Why, father, what is there so terrible about that? Something must be worrying you awfully to make——" and then recollecting herself, she stopped. "Sit right down here beside me and let me explain. Now you know how very, very kind Mr. Bornheim has been. Well, he has friends on the Committee of Art, and this committee decides whom the state shall support while paintings and statues are being produced. And I've been appointed one of these state artists. I'm to receive a salary or pension

or whatever it is called, for six whole months. Then there's to be an art exhibit and an award, and the successful contestants are to be appointed permanently—now, then, what's so terrible about all that, father? Why, you're trembling. Oh, you poor, dear man! Come, come, daddy dear, do tell me what is the matter."

But Mr. Markham repeated his assurances. "It's nothing, Dorothy, nothing."

Later in the evening Faverall Markham sought out Bornheim and thanked him for his efforts in behalf of his daughter.

"I wish I might do something for you, also, Mr. Markham," said Bornheim, "but in most quarters I have little influence, very little influence indeed."

If Mr. Markham had not been so wrapped up in his troubles he might have been more careful to note Bornheim's bearing toward Dorothy. The girl also, at times, observed the man with some uneasiness. It was not that he was not respectful, most deferential, even, but there was

something in his bearing toward her that had not been apparent in the other men she had known. She could not help contrasting this with the feeling of absolute security and trust she had felt in Seebar's presence.

Security! The word had come to her unconsciously. What had she to be afraid of in the man? He had been kind, more than kind. He had done more for them, far more, than Seebar had even attempted to do since they had been evicted from Sheridan Drive. True, she had not permitted Seebar—but then why should she permit him?—to do anything for them. It occasionally did occur to Dorothy that Bornheim might indeed do more for her father than he had done. His services were too much for her, too little for him. And though she had appealed to the politician to try to secure for her father something better than the mere clerkship he held, he showed a strange inability to make use of his influence.

But relief came from another quarter. At least

one man in the adjusting office of the Western Steel Mills had a heart.

"I know you want to get away from here," he said kindly, noting the old man's bent head and the tired weary look in the eyes. "If I were you I'd apply to the Employment Bureau for a change of occupation."

It had been one of Faverall Markham's ideals that the business should be thoroughly concentrated, that even the offices should be situated in the same group of buildings where the actual manufacturing went forward.

And thus it was that he passed from the adjusting department of the Western Steel Works to the shops of the plant, where bolts and screws and similar bits of finished iron were turned out.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SHOP DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF

THE smell of oil was in the air. The oil oozed slowly in thick, viscid streams over the lathes, turning so leisurely that they seemed almost at rest. But overhead the smooth, worn belts whirred briskly.

The building was a single-story one of concrete and steel. Its glass-covered roof sloped from a central ridge. In appearance it was not unlike a hot-house.

In just such a place as this Faverall Markham had served his apprenticeship. He remembered with the vivid distinctness of but yesterday how he had crouched at the door in half fear, half wonder at the unaccustomed scene.

A big burly workman with a grizzled beard, old Steve Harrington (he thought of the man

now—long since dead—with a rush of gratitude) had taken him kindly by the shoulder and initiated him into his simple duties, and later taught him to tend the machines.

Now he was back to this again—an old, almost a useless man, though as a manager, an organizer, his services would have been invaluable. Certainly Socialism, so far as concerned adjusting a man to the right occupation, was a dismal failure, at least up to the present.

Faverall Markham had been standing at his machine for perhaps half an hour, listening to the slight click, click of the parts, watching the rods and sprockets slowly shift in their bed of thick yellow oil, and the long steel shavings gradually unwind, while at intervals, a finished nut would drop into the receptacle prepared for it. Suddenly he discovered a fellow-workman at his elbow.

"Who are you for?" asked he in a low voice, glancing covertly around, as if fearful of being overheard.

"I don't understand," answered Mr. Markham.

His questioner was a well-built, vigorous looking fellow of perhaps thirty-five, with a quick, sharp eye. His method of speaking was hasty and impatient, due, probably, as much to his native manner as to present circumstances.

"Oh, well," he said, apparently relieved, "I was afraid you'd been tampered with already. Remember, if the foreman asks you to make certain promises, don't do it. Don't do it at least till I've talked with you again." And he was gone.

Mr. Markham's gaze followed the man wonderingly, and then he looked around at the other workmen.

The men in the shop were evidently no idlers. They bent to their tasks as though they felt responsibility, and were interested in their work, too. As he stood, overalled, bare-armed, with the steady whir of the machine sounding, the click of the falling nuts, the swift flashing of the

belts overhead,—all these things began to get into Mr. Markham's system. He felt almost happy, as he had in the old days, over his task.

" Well, and so Pete Armstrong's been meddling with you already, has he? "

The newcomer was the foreman, John Bethering.

Mr. Markham looked at a splotch of grease on the back of his hand, and deliberately wiped it off on his new blue overalls before answering.

" Why, I don't know what you'd call it," he answered slowly and guardedly. " I couldn't make out at all what he was talking about."

" He's a trouble maker, that's what he is," said the foreman fiercely. " He's dead sore because I was elected foreman instead of him. I know you've been a Capitalist and owner of these mills, and all that, but we're not going to hold that against you down here. I've heard something of your troubles up in the adjusting department, and the boys up there are pretty sore at you. Now, if you'll promise to vote for me in the next elec-

tion I'll see to it that you get treated good and white."

Bethering had a coarse, bulldog face set on a thick neck. He was of powerful build, of medium height, with a chest of great breadth and depth. He was an evil-looking man, take him all in all, and Mr. Markham was determined, if he could possibly avoid it, not to thrust himself into any rivalry that might exist in the shops. He looked past Bethering and saw that every eye in the place was fixed upon them.

"If you'd explain the situation," he began.

"It's just this way," said Bethering, leaning against a pillar, and flecking with rapid, reckless strokes of his hand a flying belt, "there's a lot of fellows in here that's Anti-Socialists. I surmise you're one, but that don't cut any figure just now. Then there are some of the boys that don't quite like me. That fellow Pete Armstrong's at the bottom of it all, damn him!" A vindictive scowl passed over Bethering's face. "He ran against me for foreman, and got licked.

He's sulking now, and so are some of the men. We're sort of in two gangs here. Armstrong won't give in. There's another election in about two weeks and he hopes to beat me then, but I'm going to make it hell for some of them fellows. I'm going to make 'em quit. I won't have opposition. Now," suddenly concluded Bethering in a tone dangerously alluring and inviting, "I want you to promise me you'll vote for me when the pinch comes. Give me your hand on it."

And he had grasped the limp and reluctant hand of his listener in his short, strong fingers.

But Mr. Markham was not to be so entrapped. "I can't promise you that, now, Mr. Bethering," he answered with decision. "Anyway, why can't I be a neutral? Why can't you fellows fight it out among yourselves?"

"Because if you ain't for me you're against me," answered Bethering doggedly, unconsciously paraphrasing a famous utterance nearly two thousand years old. "I won't have any lukewarms in my shop. You promise to vote for me or you

don't. If you don't it's going to be hell for you, you can bet that," he concluded, and turned away.

At the noon lunch hour, Mr. Markham was again approached by Armstrong. "Did the foreman explain things to you?" he asked grimly.

"He told me there was trouble in the shop and asked for my support."

"And of course you promised." There was a positive fierceness in the words.

"No, not yet," sighed Mr. Markham.

To himself, he thought, "Why couldn't these men leave him alone? He had enough troubles of his own without becoming involved in the pettiest of Socialistic politics."

"I told him," he continued, "that I wanted to remain neutral."

"Now, I'll tell you just how things are," went on Armstrong, unheeding the plea in Mr. Markham's last words. "I was a candidate for foreman, and I fought fair. Now this fellow Bethering, like a fool, began to gloat over us fellows and tried to make life miserable for the Anti-

Socialists who had voted for me. He's driven some of the boys out, but he's afraid to do much with the rest of them. He'd start in to complain about our work, but there's been so much transferring of men already, and they're getting tired of it higher up. Some of Bethering's supporters are getting sore at him, too. He'll be down and out at the next election, and he knows it. The way he's acting won't do him any good, either. He's just digging the pit deeper for himself. We're going to drop him in—drop him good and hard, too. You think over what I've told you," he concluded, for the one o'clock gong was sounding, and the men were leisurely resuming their places. "I don't ask you to promise to vote for me. I know where your vote will go, though, if you don't promise to vote for Bethering."

As he returned to his lathe, Faverall Markham could not help contrasting the lack of discipline and the change of spirit in the shop since he had known it. Were all places equally bad? In one department of the Western Steel Works he had

found a shameless inefficiency and waste of labor, with a domineering foreman. Here in the shop he had found a place divided against itself, with open hostility between a large portion of the workmen and the foreman. Here, too, he had found a foreman who was coarse, insulting, and incompetent.

It hurt, hurt more than he cared to admit even to himself, the lack of consideration he had received. So far as his influence was concerned, Faverall Markham was dead and buried. Even Armstrong, whom Mr. Markham felt that he could like, looked upon him only as a creature for his own individual ends. And these were the very men he had kept employed—paid them their wages in full, three or four years back, when there had come a temporary business crisis—these were the men for whom he had provided a pension fund, for disability, temporary or permanent, and for old age—these were the men for whom he had built model cottages, which could be purchased at cost and without interest.

He felt that the men were ungrateful, shamefully so. He did not care so much for that, however. It was the lack of respect and consideration that hurt.

The days went on and he grew to know the men. He knew them better than they knew themselves. Why shouldn't he? He had been raised in the shops. He could readily read, from his past experience, their views and opinions. He began presently to feel that he was becoming liked. A respect that he had longed for was growing. If he had refused to mingle with them, if he had even indicated that his position had once been superior to theirs, the men would promptly have manifested a resentment, keen and effective. Only his quiet speech and natural dignity marked him as being different from themselves. He had no complaints to offer, no regrets.

Themselves scarcely aware of the feeling, gradually the men began to understand the tremendous tragedy of this man's life. In quiet

ways, with little touches of delicacy, they made him realize this. Life to him began to grow not only tolerable, but even hopeful.

But still there was a thorn, pricking, irritating his side—Bethering. The ease with which Mr. Markham seemed to have entered into the good graces of the other workmen apparently annoyed him. Moreover, he had not yet received the promise of the vote. Day by day his manner became more insistent, more threatening.

"Look here, Markham," he said one day, clapping his heavy palm on the older man's shoulder, and staring him fixedly in the eye, "you're pretty thick with that man Armstrong and his crowd. Are you, or are you not going to vote for me?" And he jerked the shoulder impatiently with his hand.

Mr. Markham flushed and disengaged himself from the detaining clutch. "That's my business," he responded angrily. "Certainly, you're not adopting the best procedure to get it."

Bethering raised his fist. A wild light gleamed

in his eye, and for the moment it seemed as though he would strike.

Then, with a harsh laugh not pleasant to hear, his fingers slowly relaxed. "You'll regret this," he said.

At that moment Armstrong walked up.

"Go back to your machine," commanded Bethering.

"Oh, I don't think I will," laughed Armstrong, with insolent nonchalance. "I'll be boss here in a few days." And he laughed again, but the light in his eye was not altogether of amusement.

Bethering swallowed the insult with hard-staring eyes. He did not answer, but turned away as if in doubt.

"Why do you irritate him?" asked Mr. Markham.

"I can't help it. I like to draw that devilish glare in his eye. If he provokes me sufficiently, I'll knock him down."

Mr. Markham looked after the broad heaving shoulders of the foreman and shook his head

doubtfully. "I don't know," he commented; "I've seldom seen a more powerful man."

"My reach is longer, and I'm quicker," Armstrong returned confidently.

"Are all shops like this?"

"Why, this is a model," answered Armstrong. "Over on State Street three gangs of men quit work on a building there because they didn't like the foreman they'd elected. They demanded that they be impeached and removed, and they were. The government is helpless. It's afraid of the people. And the people are working less and less and getting sore because they don't have all the luxuries the rich had before the Great Change. I'm told, too, that the farmers are not planting much of a crop. They're all Anti-Socialists in the rural regions, you know. Things are going to come to a pretty pass, I tell you. I'm a Socialist, but I believe a mistake was made in forcing the system upon the country at this time or at any other time, for that matter. You can't force an economic system. It's got to grow. Politics

should have little to do with it. This thing," he added very earnestly, "is going to end in revolution, but I haven't time to think of that now. My chief end in life," Armstrong concluded lightly, "is to effect the overthrow of the usurper."

Reflecting upon what Armstrong had told him, Mr. Markham was troubled. But chiefly was he troubled by Bethering's threats.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DOUBTFUL GIFT

THAT afternoon Dorothy met her father with her usual smile and kiss, but there was a happier glow than ordinarily upon her face.

"Father," she said, shoving him into his large easy-chair—the quarters provided for them by the government were certainly very pleasant—and seating herself on the arm, "what do you think? I have a studio."

"A studio?"

"A real studio. It's on the top floor of the old Russian Exchange Building. It's 'way, 'way up, I know," she said hastily, "but then it is easy to reach by elevator. Mr. Bornheim is so kind —Why, father, what *is* the matter?"

"Nothing, nothing, child; did I look different?"

"Yes, indeed you did. You scowled most

positively, when I mentioned Mr. Bornheim. Now, what have you against kind, good-hearted Mr. Bornheim?"

Mr. Markham did not answer the question. Instead, he put one himself. "I am to understand that it is through the good offices of Mr. Bornheim that you secured this studio?"

"Why, yes."

"It is indeed very kind of Mr. Bornheim, but——"

"But what?"

"Oh, nothing, Dorothy. I have no doubt that Mr. Bornheim may be all that you think he is. Now, go on?"

"Well," resumed Dorothy, still, however, with a half-dubious look. "It's a little room—oh, such a cute little room. It's so quiet and still and remote. There's one thing I wish, though," she added in a tone of regret. "I wish that some of the other artists had studios up there, too."

"Dolly!" The sharpness in the tone half alarmed the girl. "Excuse me for the question,

but don't you think Mr. Bornheim is doing a little too much for you?"

"Because he's obtained the little studio for me?"

"Partly because of that, and partly because of other things."

"Well, but, father, why shouldn't he do this? He evidently takes an interest in me."

"No doubt," replied Mr. Markham dryly.

Dorothy was silent.

"Now, why should he take an interest in you? Either he's in love with you or he's doing this because of friendship for Seebar. Presuming, of course," he added slowly, "that he's of good character. I should like to see this studio. To-night, if you don't mind."

Dorothy had been standing, her head partly turned away, the back of her hand to her lips, in an attitude of doubt. "Do you want me to give up this—this work?" she said.

"Why, bless your heart, no, dear. But things have changed so that I am becoming very cau-

tious, overcautious, perhaps. But we'll look at your studio, anyway, won't we?" And with a smile he looked deep into her earnest eyes and kissed her.

Dorothy was grave, unusually so, even for her, at dinner. She understood that her father distrusted Bornheim. Still, why should he distrust him? The man was respectful, deferential, and then she remembered how more than once in the past she had felt a slight uneasiness, she still did not know why, with regard to his attentions. Was it because of Alfred Seebar, a sort of pricking of conscience? For in her heart she began to believe that neither she nor her father had been quite just to him; and unaware of the fact, she repeated her father's reflection: she would have liked to ask Seebar what he thought of Bornheim. But what difference did it make, anyway? She was not on intimate terms with Bornheim. He was little more than an acquaintance. No matter what the man's character might be, it could in no way affect her.

And so she professed to convince herself and dismiss the subject from her mind, but the approaching visit to the studio kept it fresh before her.

It was almost dusk when Dorothy and her father left the elevator on the thirtieth floor and ascended by a flight of stairs to the floor above—the top story of the building. The waning daylight cast a pale glow through the roof of ground glass, guiding their steps, as they pattered down the otherwise silent hall.

A turn to the right and Dorothy was fumbling at a door with her key. In a moment she had it open, had touched a button, and the place became brilliant with light—the light that was almost as cheap, as universal, as air or water.

Mr. Markham could not survey the room with other than a pleased eye. It was a neat room, rather small, yet well suited to its purpose. The windows were large, opening out to the south and east. Already, drawing tables and easels and stools had been provided.

"And see, father," said Dorothy, who had been observing him keenly, noting with silent pleasure his manifest approval of the place, "isn't this a dear little room?"

She led the way through a door, which, at first glance, one might judge led into a closet. Easy-chairs, a bit of a table, with some fragile tea things upon it, a picture or two, a fireplace, and a huge Davenport all lent an atmosphere of comfort. It was beautiful, cosey, and remote. Its only entrance was through the studio.

"There is only one thing I don't like about the room," said Dorothy, opening one of the windows, "and that is, this scaffold out here. They're adding something to the building beyond. See how incomplete it looks with that great hole in the wall, and the girders all showing like the bones of some huge skeleton, and the concrete so white and ragged. But they're not working on it just now, so I'll not be disturbed."

As they stood, leaning out of the window, their heads close together, the girl's arm around her

father's shoulder, there came a great burst, a huge flash, of light—noiseless, but with all the abruptness of an explosion. It was only the lights of the city being turned on, yet the two started, bumping their heads together in consequence, and then laughing at their own surprise.

After that brief little laugh they were silent again.

"Look," said Dorothy presently, "there comes the moon."

A wan bit of light it seemed just above the illumination of the city. A black cloud loomed, its huge shoulder up against the pale disk. The moon seemed to scurry along the edge, then sank behind the cloud, revealing the latter's irregular jagged shape in golden outline. And then the cloud raised its shoulder still higher and the light in the sky vanished.

"It's gone," said Dorothy.

"Yes, gone," repeated her father softly, "gone."

They sat down upon the Davenport. It was

cool and quiet and restful, up there in the little studio. They felt for the first time since their removal from the old home on Sheridan Drive that they possessed real privacy. It was wearisome, night after night, to come to the table and listen to the same useless idle chatter. What a contrast with the quiet, well-ordered dining room they had known—with the noiseless, intelligent service of the butler, with nothing whatever to interfere with their free exchange of thought.

How monotonous Dorothy's life must now be, thought Mr. Markham. He was thankful she had her art work to interest her, to take her mind from the otherwise absolute vacuity of existence that otherwise would have confronted her.

Then once more they began to talk.

Dorothy spoke of the art contest which was to be concluded in four months. "If I am successful I shall receive a really munificent income from the state," she said. "I shall work, oh, work so hard, and perhaps, then, you can retire."

"Nonsense, child, why should I retire? It is better that I have something to do."

"Really now, father, what sort of work are you doing? You have never answered my questions whenever I have asked you about it. You look so very, very tired at nights, and your hands are getting hard. Father, I wouldn't have mentioned this, but everything seems so different here to-night. I feel more myself. I feel that we are away from all those dreadful people. I feel that we are as we used to be, confiding in each other. So don't be angry, father."

Mr. Markham kissed her softly on the cheek. "I'm not angry, dear," he answered huskily. "If I seem troubled it's for your sake, Dolly. I do wish I knew more of this man, Bornheim, though, I do indeed. I trust you absolutely. Don't misunderstand me for a single instant. But then you're only a child, only a child." He sighed.

At that moment he felt most keenly how unprotected his daughter was. In case of accident

to himself what would become of her? He placed no confidence in Bornheim's professed friendship.

Thought of Bornheim brought to his mind another man. He no longer wondered if he had not made a mistake with regard to him; he *knew*. Socialist or Individualist, he felt Seebar to be a man of honor—a man to be trusted implicitly.

And Dorothy's thoughts, too, were running on the same theme. She would have broached the matter to her father, only somehow she could not quite screw up her courage.

CHAPTER XV

MRS. TWESDEM OFFERS INFORMATION

DAILY, Dorothy shut herself up in her studio for hours at a time, working hard, and hoping as zealously. Sometimes in the evening she talked with Mrs. Twesdem, with whom she could converse more freely than with her father, about her progress in the task she had undertaken; for so much hung upon these hopes, these endeavors, that Dorothy did not wish to rouse in Mr. Markham's mind an enthusiasm akin to her own. New disappointment she could bear far better than he.

Success meant an opportunity to release the ex-millionaire from the irksome grind of daily employment. From her father, Dorothy had never been able to learn just what his duties at the steel mills were. It had come to her as a shock when, through real kindness of heart, Mrs.

Twesdem had at length yielded to the daughter's pleadings and told her a portion of the facts.

The truth had one immediate effect: it crystallized, most definitely, Dorothy's purpose. Hitherto, she had striven largely, if not chiefly, for herself. The dreariness of the new life had driven her with an intensity, almost feverish, to the one thing she knew she could do—whether that doing were well or ill. But now she felt that perhaps she could help her father. From that moment a new spirit entered into her work.

In spite of the most apparent atmosphere of pseudo-culture that enveloped Mrs. Twesdem, Dorothy had grown to like her. Aside from an occasional display of tactlessness, that produced situations a bit embarrassing, the woman proved herself to be whole-hearted and sometimes even delicately sympathetic. Moreover, Dorothy found in her a shrewd interpreter of many of the phases of the Great Change, as people still continued to call the new system inaugurated by the Socialist régime.

But it was Mrs. Twesdem, who completely unforeseeing the mischief that the innocent remark would cause, suddenly took almost all the heart out of Dorothy with regard to her artistic ambition.

"I've heard," said Mrs. Twesdem casually, "that our friend, Mr. Jeppels, is to be a member on the committee which is to judge the paintings."

"Oh, Mrs. Twesdem, you don't mean it!" Dorothy's tone was as if she were protesting against a sacrilege. "Why, surely he would have said something about it himself, if he were."

"No doubt, but he was appointed only to-day, to take the place of some one who has resigned."

"Jeppels—an art critic! Oh, it can't be, I know it can't! It makes it all seem so common and tawdry."

"Well, well, Dorothy, it's nothing to worry over. Really, he likes you very much, and I have no doubt he will vote for your work——"

"Mrs. Twesdem, please don't! That makes it all the worse. To have a lot of ignorant men

passing upon something that they cannot understand—something that is the creation of one's very best in thought and feeling, is bad enough, but to think of winning through favoritism. Oh, I hope, I know, Mr. Jeppels will use his judgment, wrong though it may be, rather than do such a thing. He's a rough, coarse man, but Mrs. Twesdem, you know he wouldn't do such a thing as that, don't you?"

"Why, I suppose not," replied Mrs. Twesdem hesitatingly, looking somewhat puzzled; "but the decision, of course, doesn't rest with Jeppels alone. There are other members on the committee, you know."

"I never really thought before about the membership of this committee. The names haven't been published, have they? I naturally thought everything would be as it was in the old days. I just thought that this one thing—art—was left to me. I should have known that they wouldn't leave me that, either. Oh, Mrs. Twesdem, I looked forward to this award with such interest

and such hope—and now——" There was a hopelessness in her tone.

"Dorothy, everything is all right—really it is." Mrs. Twesdem was genuinely distressed. "You'll not feel this way, I'm sure, when you win one of the prizes——"

"Oh, I don't want to win any prizes; they're not worth while—now. The Socialists don't care for art—at least those in power don't—or they wouldn't have such men as Jeppels pass upon it. And I have been working so hard upon that painting, and I did try to do my best. Oh, it seems almost like exposing one's soul—it's desecration —to put a painting on exhibition now."

Mrs. Twesdem was beginning to recover herself. "There must have been a mistake somewhere when Jeppels was appointed," she suggested. "Some of the officials are very able men. I know nothing so absurd as this would be done intentionally. Surely it is carelessness on the part of some one. But don't feel so badly over the art side of it. Don't you remember you told

me you wanted so much to help your father? You know how much your position as state artist would do toward that. Then once the position is yours you can paint what you please. Surely, some persons will still be able to appreciate good work. There are lots of persons who couldn't appreciate art last year; but, on the other hand, those who could tell a good from a bad painting last year can do the same still. Please don't be downcast; it makes me feel horribly blue, too."

Dorothy was recovering her spirits. "Thank you, Mrs. Twesdem, for mentioning father. I mustn't forget him. I'm growing very selfish, I'm afraid. My appointment would mean so much to father. I mustn't forget that."

"Things are different with all of us now," suggested Mrs. Twesdem gently. "Some feel it more than others. It's hardest on those, I know, who have been wealthy. But, in some other cases, the change has proved itself almost as hard, too. There's the instance of my friend Katherine Grady. She's twenty-four and has supported

herself for the last eight years—ever since her parents died. She's a kind, good-natured Irish girl. She used to be very popular with the other girls where she worked. But she hasn't got many friends now. She worked in one of the labeling departments at the Stock-yards, was forewoman in fact. When this Socialism came, the girls were almost unanimous that Katherine should be elected over them. Now there's scarce one in that whole department that has a good word for her; who doesn't hate her. Poor child, she's done her best, too, to please the girls. I guess that's where a good deal of the trouble rose. Then there were others, two or three, who wanted the place. They were awfully jealous of Katy. They did all they could to destroy her popularity.

"By and by she began to notice that the girls didn't seem as friendly as they had in the past. They began to hint to her indirectly their change of opinion of her. Whenever she approached a group who were talking among themselves they

would stop, or else say ambiguous, but cutting things.

"Then one day there was a regular quarrel, and one of the girls slapped Katherine in the face. She wept over that and the other girls just laughed—some of those who had been her dearest friends, too. She resigned shortly after that and one of the women who sought the position got it —but Katy never has regained the friends she lost."

"Poor little Katy!" sighed Dorothy. "Do they act that way toward all the forewomen?"

"Yes, unless the forewoman knows how to make the girls in the shop split up into factions. But don't think it's always the forewoman that's in trouble. Sometimes it's the poor girl who's just a plain worker, it's made so hard for. There's Jessie Harding, who's a skilled lacemaker. She's very pretty, too. Prettier than a working-girl ought to be. That's one of the worst things about this Socialism. A girl is no more protected than under the old system—indeed, often less.

One of the chief men in the Chicago Employment Bureau, Oscar Thompson, happened to see her and fell in love with her—but not in the right way, not in the way we understand love, though you've heard, I know, how loose the marriage relation is held to be by many nowadays. In fact, you know how many would abolish marriage entirely. Well, this Oscar Thompson won her confidence. He is a big man, handsome, and gentle with women. Then, when at last she understood his purpose, she would have nothing more to do with him. But he tried to use indirect means. In some way he won over the forewoman in the shop where Jessie was employed, and when this forewoman broached the matter to her and the girl wouldn't yield, fault was found with her work. This forewoman managed the thing so cleverly that the antagonism of the other lacemakers was not aroused. Jessie Harding was practically driven to seek other employment. She tried to get transferred, but all they would offer her was the roughest and

hardest kind of work. She's in the kitchen now at the Pelion. Of course they've got to give her work and pay her standard wages, but still they find all sorts of methods of persecuting her. Thompson holds out the most tempting promises to her, too."

"Oh," cried Dorothy, her eyes burning with indignation, "the monster!"

After a pause she added: "But, Mrs. Twesdem, there still are left some good people. There's Mr. Grant, our old minister. It seems so strange to see him in the entry department over in the Central Distribution Building. He's still the same kind, patient man he always was. And his sermons every Sunday are just as wholesome and as earnest as they used to be. Indeed, he seems to be more earnest, for he is absolutely free to speak from his own heart. Of course he gets nothing for it. That was a wicked law which prohibits any lecturer or minister from receiving money by gift or subscription. Think of it, all the churches, all the private schools, all the great

endowed universities confiscated by the state, along with our homes. Sometimes I can scarcely believe that I am not dreaming. Every morning when I wake up I go over many of the events of the several months past to make sure that it is not a dream, always hoping that I will find some inconsistency in the events. But everything fits in too well, and I know then that it's all only too real.

" I suppose I ought to feel thankful that father and I are so much better off than we might be, but I can't help thinking, too, of the things I used to take as a matter of course, but which, I fear, have gone out of my life forever."

CHAPTER XVI

A TERRIBLE THING HAPPENS

THE election of foreman in the machine shop of the Western Steel Mills took place early in September. No specified date was set by the Constitution for these industrial elections, as they were called. The only requirement was that they be held in September not later than the fifteenth of the month. While in all the departments of the steel mills considerable friction existed, nowhere was there anything equal to the bitterness of the quarrel that had put Armstrong and Bethering at sword's points. The rivals, whenever they chanced to meet, were insolently hostile. No two men, the workers declared, had ever harbored such bitter, open hatred without its leading, sooner or later, to a test of physical strength.

On this morning, the men in Bethering's de-

partment came to the plant earlier than usual. Notwithstanding the unmistakable threats of Bethering, and the more subtle insinuations of his rival, there were still several men who had not avowed themselves. This unknown vote held the balance of power.

It seemed curious that the overbearing Bethering should have commanded the following he did, but he had the bluff, hearty manner that attracts many men. Moreover, there were some, who, in the event of his success, did not care to suffer his mean, petty vengeance.

There was a striking difference in the methods employed by the two candidates in soliciting votes. "Now, my man," Bethering would say, dropping his broad red hands to his hips and surveying his prospect with just the trace of a sneer on his face, "you're going to climb into the band wagon before it's too late, ain't you? It's going to be rough riding for those who ain't in my band wagon."

Armstrong would throw his arm in a friendly

clasp over the shoulder of the man he solicited. "Brother," he would say, "it's a choice between a low-down browbeater and myself. I'll frankly admit I think I am the better man. If you don't think so, well, then some one's a poor judge. We'll all be happier, though, if you elect me."

This morning the men were standing or sitting in groups around the shop. The oil was oozing from the machines as usual, overhead the belts snapped by, but no man was at work. Some one apparently had thoughtlessly turned on the power, and no one seemed to consider a saving to the government, by shutting it down, worth while. The election had got into the blood, as elections have got into the blood of men since that day ages ago, when the two factions of some tribe, wearying of cutting one another's throats, decided to test by ballot which side was numerically the greater, and hence, the stronger.

There were about a hundred men who worked in the machine shop. This matter of the election had suddenly grown more important in their eyes

than it had been deemed a week ago. As the evenness of the contest became more apparent, every vote took on a new value.

Three men were selected to count the ballots. Bethering chose one, Armstrong another, and these two fixed upon a third.

It was a crude, antiquated system they employed in their voting. A plain white card was passed around to each man and upon this he wrote his choice. Then he walked up to the ballot-box, also hastily improvised for the purpose, and dropped the bit of cardboard through the opening.

Bethering and Armstrong, with keen, alert eyes watched jealously over the proceedings. Once it seemed as if Bethering would interfere with a voter, even by force. He seized a depressed, sad-eyed-appearing man by the shoulder. "Now look here, Jack," he said; "you know a damn sight better than to vote the way you're going to. Tear that up and do it right."

His words were as rough as his grip, and the man paused doubtfully.

"No interference here," said Armstrong harshly; "every man votes as he pleases."

For a moment the two candidates glared at each other. Then Bethering's hand dropped, and the balloting went on.

It was over in a few minutes, and they were counting the votes, one of the three judges of election reading each name aloud, as the card passed through his hands, and marking down the result.

"Armstrong — Bethering — Armstrong — Armstrong—Bethering," ran on the voice, in a jerky, sing-song tone.

There came a brief pause to add up the totals. Then another moment of silence followed, to verify the result.

Presently one of the three judges stood up, looking from the slip of paper he held in his hand to the men in front of him, and then back again to the slip of paper.

"There's no use in going through any preliminaries, I guess," he said. "You're all anxious to know what the result is. There's ninety-nine

votes in all cast—divided as follows: Armstrong, fifty; Bethering, forty-nine."

"There's been cheating here—dirty, low-down cheating!" Bethering had leaped forward, his fists waving, his teeth set in an ugly clinch. "There's only ninety-seven of us. There's two votes too many."

"Well, if there are, who cast them?" Armstrong put the question with provoking coolness.

The voters had gathered in a close mass, half-circling about the three judges of election, standing beside the table and the two candidates facing each other. There was an expectant look on their faces as they waited for developments, apparently pleased at the exciting turn affairs were taking.

"Who cast them?" snarled Bethering; "why, who would cast them? I bet the losers didn't."

"Oh, I don't know," answered Armstrong, still irritatingly cool, "that doesn't necessarily follow. It looks to me rather as if the losers underestimated their strength by a couple of votes, and were careless in not making up the

deficiency to the right amount. Why didn't you add four ballots instead of two? It would have been just as easy, I should think."

It was the sneer on Armstrong's face and the smile of many of the onlookers that now almost completely destroyed Bethering's always uncertain self-control. Things began to spin before his eyes. The primitive instinctive desire to crush that sneering face, to stop that insolent voice, came to him.

Still the words sounded: "I think we'd better have another vote. What do you say, boys?"

"Damn you, you've cheated, any one can see that," almost screamed Bethering. "Why in hell should we take another vote—so you can stuff the ballot-box once more—so you can intimidate some of the men, hey?"

His fist shook within a few inches of Armstrong's eyes. He was nearly insane now with passion. The hot blood flooded his head. He seemed scarcely to see or to be able to breathe. Still he did not strike.

Armstrong disdained to answer his words. "What will you have, boys," he repeated, "another ballot?"

And then Bethering lost all sense of reason. The uproar about him stimulated him to a greater frenzy, as it might a madman. Without a word of warning suddenly his fist shot out, aimed straight between those insolent, mocking eyes. Still, Armstrong had time to dodge and fend off the blow with his right arm, almost with the same movement hitting back at Bethering, and landing on his jaw with a force that stopped him. It had been a short jab, but not quite quick enough to injure seriously the foreman.

And then the two men went at it more warily.

To Mr. Markham a fight of this sort was an extraordinary spectacle. In the early days of his life in the shops he had known men to spring at each other in just such fashion as Armstrong and Bethering now fought, but cooler and wiser heads, backed by powerful arms, had always interfered, and brought hostilities to an abrupt and

tame termination. Moreover, he had forgotten the rougher life of his younger years. His tastes had been softened and refined by the larger atmosphere his wealth and position had placed him in. It was with a sense of shrinking, a half-fearful thrill, that he watched the combat. But the spectacle, if repugnant, still seemed strangely to fascinate him, and he found himself pushing forward to get a better view.

Both were active men, muscular and powerful, but Armstrong had the finer physique. He was erect, sinewy, long of reach. Bethering stooped awkwardly, in a half-crouching posture, but with a compactness of build and a force of blow that Armstrong could not equal.

What the fight was for no one paused to consider. It could have no bearing on the election; but the principals and their following evidently seemed to think that, somehow, their interests were staked on the outcome of this battle.

For a little while the combatants manœuvered about, neither apparently having an advantage

over the other, Armstrong's remarkable reach offsetting Bethering's greater strength. Then the men clinched, and Bethering, while holding, struck his antagonist two short blows in the stomach, and, groaning, Armstrong fell to the floor. He lay, gasping for breath, his eyes closed, while Bethering, his face gleaming with sweat, stood over him, ready to strike again.

There came a moment's pause, and then the wild shout of delight that burst from the throats of Bethering's supporters was met with an angry roar from the defeated fighter's following. More fiercely excited than before, even, the men pressed in closer.

A tall, gaunt man, overtopping his fellows by half a head, struck out at Bethering with a short heavy iron bar. It slipped from his fingers, falling to the concrete floor. A shrill yell rising above the din of other voices told that it had crushed a foot.

Some one from behind in the swirling throng drove a fist into the foreman's back. Furious, he

wheeled about, his face savage and drawn, like a beast's.

Straight against the table he flung himself, in his effort to get at his assailant, sending it smashing on its side. Blows were aimed at his head and face, sinewy hands gripped at his body, but he buffeted his way through with the strength of one gone mad. Terrified by the insane fire he saw in Bethering's eyes, the man who had struck the blow was fleeing toward the door leading into the furnace rooms, where the steel itself was manufactured.

With the fall of Armstrong, Mr. Markham had detached himself from the ring of spectators, and as the imminence of a general fracas became evident, had retreated in the direction of this furnace room. When the rush, following the overturning of the table, was made in his direction, he passed through the door, and stepped to one side, the fugitive, with Bethering at his heels, and the whole mob close behind, dashing after an instant later.

In the furnace room work was going forward as usual. Flame and sparks leaped upward from the huge converters, filled with their molten steel. The place was partly clouded with smoke, and the pungent vapors from the metal caught the nostrils sharply. Overhead the traveling crane, operated by a workman, who, suspended, rode with it, was sweeping along, a ladle of the liquid metal hanging from the hook and chain of the crane. This much Mr. Markham almost unconsciously noted above the hiss and clamor that filled the air, the heavy rattle and groan of car wheels, as a string of mono-rail freights was slowly switched and brought to a standstill within the works.

At the sudden eruption from the machine-shop, the steelworkers, amazed, paused at their tasks. For the moment the operator of the traveling crane forgot his duty, to watch the scene below. He saw two men running around to the right, farthest from himself, to clear the freight cars, a shouting angry horde of others at

their heels. But the old man, closer to him, standing against the end of the nearest car, he did not notice. He saw the fugitive fly across the track and his pursuer stumble and fall over a projecting obstacle, probably a spike. But to that he paid no more heed.

A jar had brought him back to his duty. The ladle, carried forward, unheeded, by the traveling crane, had struck against the end of the train, toward which the operator and his charge had been slowly carried, and the white stream was tumbling to the floor like a miniature mountain cataract. As the hot, fiery stuff, so deceptively pale, dashed upon the ground, a shower of sparks flew up. Then in the shadow of the cars, he saw a man, catching at his eyes and swaying about, as if in intense agony. Still not quite comprehending, he stared. The next instant he realized fully what had happened, as he caught a glimpse of the man's face. Those tiny sparks were drops of liquid steel, and he knew the eyes of the man who so silently writhed and twisted, were as sight-

less and seared as if burned by hot irons. With complete awakening, he brought the machinery of the crane to a stop.

Afterward he learned that the man's name was Faverall Markham.

CHAPTER XVII

DOUBT

THE third of November, 1953, will ever be remembered as one of the most terrible days in the history of this country. Looking back upon it now, it seems incredible that such things could possibly have happened as actually did occur on the night of that day and the early morning hours of the fourth.

That there was a twofold plot against the government was afterward proved. How wide its ramifications were will never be known, but it is doubtful if either of the two separate organizations of conspirators was at all aware of the plans, or even the existence, of the other.

However, that may be, events proved there was widespread hatred of the Socialist régime, and an alert eagerness on the part of the masses to seize any opportunity to strike against it. One

thing is known for certain,—where and how the trouble actually started.

The third of November was the anniversary of the election which established the Socialist régime. The press, the government press, for, of course, there was none other now, spoke in enthusiastic terms of the wonderful interest that was being manifested by the whole country over the approaching national celebration. Speaking editorially, the Chicago *Republic* had said:

Even the farmers are more than satisfied with present conditions. The sun has shone, the rain has fallen, the grain has ripened, and cattle and hogs have waxed fat, as they always have. Every man who but a year ago was a farmhand, now shares the bounty of the soil with him who formerly was his employer. And this with in no wise depriving the latter of any of his accustomed wants, or even luxuries. The farmer ever has been the backbone of the Nation, and with him not only satisfied and contented, but supporting the Constitution with an eager enthusiasm, the success of the Great Revolution is assured. The universal brotherhood is established and every man has at last come into his own.

About this time Seebar received the following letter from his Uncle Richard. One part, in particular, interested him:

As I predicted, I have had an unusually heavy crop this year. Conditions have been excellent for the best results. In spite of all this, however, if I am to judge by my neighbors, the acreage this year has been very light. This is due to one thing solely:—neglect of the growing crops, and indifference and carelessness in harvesting them. The confiscation of the lands and herds, the excessively heavy government tax on the present crop to meet the extraordinary expenses of putting the new system into operation, and the division with the hired men, as well as the knowledge that next spring hundreds of thousands of men plan to migrate to farms already occupied, to take a share of the profits, have removed all incentive. Moreover, every man feels that no hardship will come to him; the government provides homes, and even if he has a crop failure the nation is back of him. If we continue to prosper here in the country, it will be despite ourselves.

The newspapers declare that there will be a bumper crop this year. It is not true. There will be an unusually heavy shortage, for reasons I have pointed out.

I have moved into the government hotel that has been provided for two dozen of us farmers and families. I must admit that conditions here are, on the whole, agreeable.

If there was discontent in the country, Seebar knew there was more of it in the city. Whether or not time would bring about a satisfactory adjustment of vexing problems, he did not know, but he hoped and believed it would. Men, he felt, were too impatient and were demanding impossibilities.

Still he was beset with a host of doubts, and it was not with a very great deal of enthusiasm that he assisted in the plans for the anniversary celebration at Chicago. Following a great parade, a number of speeches were to be capped by a hundred banquets held simultaneously in as many different parts of the city. And, finally, there were to be more speeches.

It was up in his old office in the Chamber of Trade Building, which had been converted to government administrative uses, that on this

evening of November third, Seebar was alone with his friend, Harry Thornton, formerly managing editor of the *Globe,* but now a reporter on the *Republic.*

Seebar was to speak at the main banquet that night in the New Auditorium, and Franklin S. Furst, President of the United States, was to speak there also. Five thousand people were to be present.

A twelvemonth back, Thornton had seemed younger than his years. His face had been fuller, and the lines about his mouth were scarcely visible then. Now there were streaks of gray over the temples. Since the night of the election, when he and Seebar, together with Bornheim and Jeppels, had awaited the returns in that same room, the man had grown older in thought. Always earnest, his earnestness had become a settled seriousness.

"There's an undercurrent in public opinion that I don't at all understand, Fred," he said to Seebar. "I'm thirty-eight now, and I've lived

the atmosphere of the city, that only a newspaper man can get, for sixteen years. I've assisted in unearthing gangs of blackmailers. I got on the inside in that big anarchist plot ten years ago, when it was planned to assassinate the President, and the Governor of every state, simultaneously. We exposed in the *Globe* the big labor conspiracy, and our paper was the first to print the secret pact of Mexico and the South American republics to make war on the United States. Our paper has forecast correctly nine out of ten times the results of city, state, and national elections, but there is something in the atmosphere now that totally bewilders me. Whether it is to be an uprising of the Capitalists, or of the Socialist malcontents, I can't say; I can't lay my finger on anything definite either, but my instinct tells me there is something brewing."

Thornton struck a match and held his half-burnt cigar, which had gone out, over the blaze, slowly revolving it between his fingers. Then he replaced it in his mouth, and, with a whiff or

two, to get it drawing once more, settled back in his chair.

Seebar made no reply. He was sitting with his eyes on the floor, drumming the table with his forefinger.

"This celebration to-night," went on Thornton, "should mean a tremendous outburst of enthusiasm for the government. It should strengthen it. The promises the speakers will renew at the various banquets cannot help but have their effect. They are certain to give new hope to the people—for a time at least."

Seebar raised his eyes. "You speak as though the government has failed to keep its promises," he said; "in what respects has it failed?"

Thornton came straight back without a moment's hesitation. "Why, what man is contented with his present lot? What man feels that he receives the just share he is entitled to for his labor? Every workman looks askance at his fellows in other trades, as much as to say: 'You are robbing me of the just rewards of my time

and toil.' How do the government commissioners regulate, for instance, the value of the labor of dressing the raw leather, of tanning it, of making it into shoes, of transporting it in the form of shoes to the salesrooms, and of distributing these shoes? Under the Individualistic régime the law of supply and demand regulated all this. All occupations you declare to be equally productive. Your commissioners therefore decreed that the man who sweated in the stench of the tannery should receive no more than the cutter who shaped the leather for shoes. Result: few wanted to work in the tannery, and the hours there had to be shortened. Of these shorter hours the cutter is jealous. So is it with every craft and business—jealousy everywhere. The commissions are openly accused of favoritism. Lucky for them that there is no private press to open fire.

"Men cried for years like children for the moon, for the ideal of Socialism, for an unselfish, universal brotherhood of man. Now that they

have got their Socialism, human nature is still the same old selfish thing unchanged.

"Socialism may, or may not, have been coming in the course of evolution. If it was, then it was a mistake to force it arbitrarily. If it was not, it was equally a mistake. Either way, you are on the horns of a dilemma; you have an impossible system of government that cannot, by any chance, last."

"All these matters were thrashed out in the course of the campaign, and I am not going to attempt to justify Socialism now. Socialism is with us, and to stay, I believe." Seebar spoke with decision. "You have forebodings that something is about to happen. An outbreak may occur, but I do not believe it will be made by either Individualists or Socialists. If at all, it will be by anarchists, and then I believe there will be nothing more harmful than a demonstration, for anarchy only survives as a theoretic principle. With the establishment of Socialism, the excuse for it has passed. Thornton, old man, don't be

offended by my attitude, but I cannot allow any doubt to harrow me just now. If, as one of the leaders, I am to see this thing through I must have full confidence in my cause."

"Yes," said Thornton, "I understand."

"I have given up a great deal," went on Seebar; "given up everything worth while in life for this Socialism—a woman's love. When I broke with her I didn't realize at the time just what it meant. My head was full of other things. Besides, I thought everything would be all right in a few weeks, but she remained obdurate. She asked me to choose—herself or Socialism, and I chose Socialism. You know the story, though I've never mentioned anything of this to you before. Been common enough talk everywhere though, I dare say.

"And so when any one questions the success of the movement for which I rightly feel that I have sacrificed so much, it makes me almost beside myself with despair. I have learned that the greatest thing a man can renounce is a

woman's love. Renunciation of ambition is nothing—nothing compared with it."

Seebar rose and stepped toward the window. "And a few hours from now," he said bitterly, "I must wax eloquent on the subject of my own and man's material happiness."

Thornton was surprised. Never had he heard the reticent Seebar open his heart thus. He had gradually in the last year and a half come to learn Seebar's worth—come to consider him as a friend, well worth the having, but, until that afternoon, the latter had never confided in him in this manner.

The dusk of early evening was already beginning to penetrate the room, and the outlines of furniture and objects were growing indistinct. How quiet it was there! The whir of the monorail, and the beat of feet on the pavement were as the distant murmur of the wind. How their relative positions had changed in the last eighteen months, Thornton reflected. He had been the managing editor of the *Globe;* Seebar a strug-

gling young lawyer. But Seebar was now a big man in politics, and he—well, he was almost as obscure as when he was a cub reporter. Yet, who was the happier now?

"Thornton," said Seebar, turning from the window, "I have over-exaggerated the importance of materialistic comfort,—or perhaps I am not in a normal state of mind to reason. I used to think,—it was my philosophy of life,—that where the material wants were supplied and the body healthy, man should be happy and normal. I used to express it thus: 'Morality is only a question of economic and physiological well-being.' But I find that with spirituality gone out of life—life is worth nothing. With spirituality, man may be sick or poor, or both, and still be happy—supremely so.

"Thornton, I don't regret that I sacrificed love to conscience and duty; what I feel is, that perhaps I have made a mistake, made a wanton sacrifice for a principle that may not, as time may prove, be worth the snap of a finger."

He began to walk about the room in the deepening dusk, talking as he did so.

"I have tried to speak with her more than once, but she will not hear me. I wish I could help her, help her and her father. Oh, it was awful the way he was blinded! That seems to have strengthened her against me more than ever. I believe, though, that she is so determinedly unforgiving because I was present the day of the eviction from their home on Sheridan Drive."

He stopped again at the window. "Oh, well, what's the use," he said, sighing deeply. "There are other things to think of,—at least I suppose there are."

And then the city lights, brilliant, refulgent, flashed up.

Seebar wheeled about and faced Thornton. "Come," he said, "let's go."

CHAPTER XVIII

IN THE LION'S HOUSE

IN the street a nipping, fog-bearing wind, sweeping in from the lake, was driving the throngs into a quickened pace.

"It gets to the skin," remarked Thornton, drawing the collar of his coat more closely about his throat.

They were walking east, facing the gale.

"Yes, it's a nasty night," agreed Seebar. "Let's go into the Lion's House, and warm up a bit before the banquet. Besides, we're too early, anyway."

Presently they had come to Michigan Avenue. They got the full force of the breeze here, for only the strip of park here separated them from the lake. The street pavement was all ashine with the glint of lights.

From the east, over the naked trees of the

strip of park, burying them from sight, the heavy wet fog was drifting in. The gleam of lights was turning to a ghastly reddish glow. The mist was crawling now over the shining pavement.

Yet in spite of wind and fog, the boulevard was swarming with human life. It was a grand holiday. The doors of the cafés, the restaurants, the saloons were open to the throng of pleasure seekers, for the government maintained all these institutions, as hitherto under private ownership.

"Here we are," said Seebar suddenly, elbowing his way to the right with Thornton close at his side, and presently the two had passed through the softly swinging doors of the Lion's House.

The corridor was magnificently decorated, and no wonder. This had formerly been the Imperial Hotel, generally acclaimed by travelers as the finest in all America.

The interior was of marble, inlaid with gold

and green and ruby red, and one could see stained glass windows of rare design and wonderful coloring and figures.

But in spite of the beauty and magnificence of the place, it was not what it had formerly been. Splendid as all appeared, the Imperial—now the Lion's House—was little better than a great wine hall.

Seebar and Thornton passed into one of the dining halls, where an orchestra was playing—and where women and men, most of the former in gay-colored gowns, and great hats, were seated, eating and drinking, chiefly drinking, however.

"H'm!" said Thornton glancing about him, as they were seated at a table.

The scene was quite common to him. In the old days he had often dined here, and since his declension to the reportorial ranks, in the course of his newsgathering he had frequently had occasion to visit the place.

"What is it?" asked Seebar.

"Oh, nothing," answered Thornton. He recalled in time the sacrifice that Seebar had made for the cause of Socialism. His friend, he resolved, should never again hear an unsolicited criticism of the system from his lips.

"Come, what is it?" urged Seebar.

"Well," replied Thornton with evident reluctance, "did you observe the man who just passed us?"

"Why, not beyond noting you spoke to him."

"He's been most unfortunate. His wife is recovering very slowly from a severe attack of pneumonia, and last spring his little boy died of some throat trouble."

"What's his name?" asked Seebar with sudden intuition.

"Ed—Edge—Edgeington, yes, Edgeington," Thornton repeated with full assurance that this time he had the name correctly.

But Seebar wished complete establishment of the man's identity.

"What's his business?" he inquired.

"Furniture mover, I believe. Did you know him?"

Seebar nodded. He remembered the manliness of the husband, the gentleness of the wife, and the cold dreariness of their surroundings. What a contrast was that little family circle, warm with affection at least, with the scene now before them, which was a refutation of the party promises—more amusements, more diversions for the people, hence, less immorality. Many of the women in the place now would not have been admitted under private management. And there was more of a care-free, reckless atmosphere than was manifest even in the Bohemian and more questionable places in the old days.

"I came to this cause full of ambition, full of hope, of energy, tremendous energy," said Seebar. "Frankly, I can't see that mankind is happier or better. Old man, my heart is heavy to-night. I have given everything, everything, for a cause that is worthless, and so have thousands of others."

He hung his head despondently.

Presently he raised it, with a cynical smile. "But nevertheless, my defense of it all is going to make a sensation to-night."

"What, Seebar," exclaimed Thornton, alarmed at the peculiar tone of his friend, "you won't attack Socialism?"

"Bless you, no! I simply will prove to myself and you that oratory is a hollow and insidious art that really means nothing."

He paused for a moment.

"I strongly suspect what I have been saying is a lot of rot. I certainly am not myself to-night. Please forget all this. Maybe it's the story you told me about Edgeington. I used to know the man, or perhaps it's just that world weariness that comes over all of us at times. Let's forget it. Here's your health, old man," and he slowly raised the glass to his lips.

Suddenly he turned pale, his eyes staring at something beyond Thornton; the glass slipped from between his fingers, falling shattered on the

table, the wine flowing unheeded over the white cloth.

He rose to his feet, and as his fingers clutched the back of his chair he grew steadier, the color returned to his face, and with a glint in his eye, he made his way toward a couple who had just entered and were seating themselves a short distance away.

In some perturbation Thornton watched him. Then as Seebar's purpose became evident to him, he scrutinized more closely this pair. The man was Bornheim, and from his friend's excited manner, Thornton judged who the woman must be. His doubt was removed by Seebar's outburst of speech.

"Dorothy, what does this mean? Bornheim, I am surprised." The young man was turning from the one menacingly to the other.

"You have no right to address me thus, sir," exclaimed Miss Markham, a flush of anger and embarrassment sweeping over her face, and she sought Bornheim's aid.

The politician laughed, though a bit uneasily.

"Why, really, Seebar, I don't know what you mean. Miss Markham knows the Imperial Hotel. She has been here scores of times, I have no doubt. And besides, my dear man, what business is it of yours, anyway? I hardly think Miss Markham claims your acquaintance. But sit down, we are attracting attention."

But Seebar paid no heed to this unwelcome invitation.

"Miss Markham may have been here scores of times when this place was known as the Imperial Hotel," he said, "in fact I know she has, for I have been in this room with her several times myself."

"Sit down," reiterated Bornheim.

"You know, yourself, Bornheim, just as well as I do," went on Seebar, as he slipped into a chair, "that the Imperial Hotel is not the same as it was eighteen months ago. Bornheim, if you were anything of a gentleman, you would not bring her here."

"Seebar, if this were another time and place, I'd knock you down."

"Mr. Bornheim, please,——" interrupted Dorothy, laying a protesting hand upon his arm. Then turning to Seebar she said: "I wish to tell you that you gratuitously insult Mr. Bornheim, and indirectly me. If this place were managed by private individuals, I might, perhaps, believe that there was some slight foundation to your insinuations, and that Mr. Bornheim had inadvertently brought me to a place where the conventions were different from mine. But since the Socialists have taken charge of the Imperial Hotel, such a thing, of course, must be absolutely impossible."

Seebar ignored her attempt at sarcasm. His blood was up, and he was resolved that she should no longer deny him a hearing.

"I am sorry you take my words in the spirit you do," he said; "I would give the same advice to a complete stranger. You show, too, a wonderful inconsistency in refusing acquaintance

with me, because I am a Socialist, and yet you seem to be able to affiliate with others mighty easily. However, let that pass."

Then almost before she was aware of the fact, Dorothy had begun a defense of herself. "Mr. Bornheim was very kind," she declared. "He was the only friend of father and myself when we were turned out of our home."

"And yet your father worked as a factory hand, though I begged to be allowed to use my influence——"

But he had stopped short. "I—I beg your pardon," he said humbly, "I didn't mean——"

There were tears in the girl's eyes.

"You brute——" exclaimed Bornheim in low tones, glancing toward Dorothy to make certain she had heard his words.

Seebar's answer was a look of withering contempt, and the sight of the man steeled him in his purpose.

"I am sorry, Miss Markham," he went on, "but for nearly a year and a half now I have vainly

attempted to speak with you. I have my opportunity now, even if there is present a third person, a person most offensive to me. However, one must take opportunities as he finds them.

"The proposition in the beginning was simply this, Miss Markham: I loved you and I was a Socialist. I had secured leadership. You asked me to abandon either it or you. What course could an honorable man have pursued? You wronged me in——"

"And what about the day you turned father and me out of our home?"

"I didn't turn you out. I was merely so unfortunate as to be present."

"You came to gloat over our misfortune."

"Dorothy, you are unreasonable."

"Will you cease to annoy me, sir? Either you or I must withdraw. Mr. Bornheim, will you be so kind as to escort me——"

But Seebar was on his feet, white to the lips.

Leaning over the table, with his arms supporting him, he almost snarled out the words, "Very

well, Dorothy. But I shall yet say to you what I mean to say. Moreover," he added, "you will regret that you have acted as you are doing now. Look around you upon the faces of the women you see here, and in your own heart answer yourself whether I, or this man, is right."

And Seebar had turned back to where Thornton was awaiting him.

Without so much as looking around to see what action Dorothy and Bornheim were taking, Seebar led the way to the door.

CHAPTER XIX

THE STAMPEDE IN THE NEW AUDITORIUM

SEEBAR'S speech that night was a triumph for the Socialist leaders. It was bold, aggressive, decisive. The real purpose of the great national celebration that day was to quiet the criticism which had so persistently been directed against the government for these many weeks back. It was to rouse enthusiasm, to make the discontented believe that, in the midst of the apparent general loyalty, they alone were dissatisfied.

At the hundred and more banquets, held in various quarters of the city, the same ideas were persistently dwelt upon—that there were unhappiness and wrong under the Capitalistic system; that there were peace, plenty, content, under the Socialist régime. No reference was made to the

covert hostility that was manifestly present to those who used their eyes and ears and who thought at all seriously.

But from the program Seebar's speech differed radically. He recognized the condition that existed—boldly and openly he recognized it. There were starts of surprise, uneasy shifting about in the seats, covert glances of dismay into one another's eyes, on the part of the leaders, when Seebar, in the course of a few minutes of speaking, reverted to his old style of oratory,—the style that had made him famous at a bound, the style of oratory that had helped win the campaign. He referred frankly and freely to the evils that existed at the present time, and then boldly challenged his auditors to deny that worse evils had not existed only a year back. He did not stand on the defensive. He recognized that there were enemies of the administration, admitted that there were many of them, and then proceeded to attack them with ruthless vigor.

Yet, it was with a listless lack of interest that

he had begun his speech. Two other men had preceded him, and the applause that had greeted them had been obviously perfunctory, as indeed had been their speeches.

It was after the long tables had been cleared, the cigars served, the speakers of the evening assembled, owing to the vastness of the hall, on a platform especially constructed for the purpose, at one end.

Of the five thousand people there, none could have been more disheartened than was Seebar. Low as his spirits had been before, the scene in the Lion's House had depressed him unutterably. The cause he had championed he began to see now in its most unfavorable light. Worst of all, he had quarreled with Dorothy. All hope of reconciliation with her now seemed lost.

His predecessor had finished his timidly conservative speech, and Seebar came to the edge of the platform, anxious for but one thing—to get through in not too indecent haste and sit down. In front, and to right and left, the long

tables stretched away, mechanically measuring off the audience seated around them, into rectangles. These geometrical figures reminded Seebar of a multitude of garden plots. Somehow, all these people seemed to him curiously unpersonal. They formed merely a living mass, hardly existing to him as made up of distinct personalities. Only, well to the middle of the gallery, in the front row, three men seemed to stand out to Seebar as individuals. Why this was so, he did not think to ask himself. They were far away—too far away for him to note them in any detail, even had he so desired. Neither were their actions such as to call for special comment, except for the fact that one of them had lowered a red flag—the flag of the Socialists—over the parapet of the gallery, and occasionally wafted it back and forth with a slow, gentle motion.

Then as Seebar began to speak, down in that blur of faces, one that he knew stood out,—the partly wondering, partly curious face of Dorothy Markham. Almost at the same instant, side by

side with hers, he recognized the round full features of Bornheim.

His listlessness was gone. Surging, raging anger came into his soul. She had never heard him—him, the great Seebar, speak,—the man whose words swayed audiences. No, never would it do to belittle his own powers, now. The incentive was bigger than ambition, more tremendous than the inspiration of woman's love: the incentive was defiance.

His voice strengthened, his lips set, his eyes blazed, and with them looking straight into hers, he rose to his flights of oratory.

The assemblage thought he was talking to it; he was not. The assemblage thought his eloquence was directed toward the crushing of the enemies of Socialism. It was not. For Seebar there was but one auditor, and for the greater part of the time he looked into that one auditor's eyes. Not for Socialism, not for the administration, not for the safety of the state, he pleaded, but for himself.

For a time Dorothy sat with a half-defiant look. Then presently her eyes grew fixed and commenced to shine, and color was upon her cheeks. But Seebar, too intent upon his purpose, a torturing fire within his breast, noted nothing of this, or if he did, failed to read the meaning.

His words fairly seemed to crackle with the old class hatred, and yet he marshaled his arguments—despite all his impetuosity and fire—with a consummate skill. And then Seebar turned from his attack upon the opponents and critics to a defense of Socialism.

For the moment he had even forgotten Dorothy. The spell of his own magic was upon him. "We must have patience, we must have confidence in the administration. Can we afford to believe that the economic principles upon which this government is founded are false? Failure for every new form of government has always been predicted. When the thirteen colonies asserted their independence as a nation, old world critics scoffed at their presumption."

At these words he paused, and raised his eyes from Dorothy to the gallery.

Those were the last words Seebar was ever destined to utter as a Socialist leader, from the platform. For the terrible thing had happened, the terrible thing that Thornton had felt to be in the air.

As Seebar uttered the words, "We must have confidence in the administration," the man with the red flag cast the bunting from him and rose to his feet. From his bosom he drew forth a long strip of silk, also red, but criss-crossed with blue lines—the flag of the anarchists—the blue to distinguish it from the new national flag.

Leaning far forward, he whipped it with a menacing snap out over the heads of the audience.

Seebar's eyes were fixed on the fluttering, flame-like strip.

Then before he could adequately begin to realize what was happening, the man's two companions had also leaped to their feet.

He saw their right fists shoot in air and two

black objects come hurtling over the heads of the crowd. They fell to the floor, midway between gallery and platform.

There was a deafening report. The audience were on their feet, an oscillating mass falling away from the centre of the hall.

As yet there were no sounds of voices. Nothing but the rush and beat of feet.

The centre of the hall, from which the people were fleeing, seemed to open up like a crater. Then from this crater's edge came one long, piercing shriek of agony and fear.

It was a heartrending cry,—a cry to chill the blood. It seemed for the moment to calm the panic. Then, as the cry died away to a low agonized moan, the silence of the crowd was broken by a woman's hysterical screams of terror.

The battle for life was on again—the fierce unreasoning battle,—wild and uncontrolled as the stampede of a herd of cattle. The brute instinct for self-preservation that thousands of years could not eliminate, was uppermost. Men fought

and struggled and bellowed like bulls, striking and crushing down, with fist and heel, the weaker and those that stumbled.

The gallery, too, was emptying with a roar like a prolonged roll of thunder.

Still the three men remained as they had risen, the red flag, lined with blue, still fluttering. But no one thought to arrest them where they stood. They were fled from as if plague-stricken.

And then Seebar, who had been standing as one stunned, awoke to a thought most horrible. It was down toward the centre, where the bombs had been exploded, that Dorothy had sat. He looked at the mass of broken chairs, overturned tables, mingled with bodies and fragments of human flesh, and the possibility of the utter awfulness of the situation to him caused him to turn his gaze away in horror.

Where were Dorothy and Bornheim? Somewhere in that mass? God—he could not endure the thought!

He half-started to leap from the platform down

into the hall, then paused in doubt as to what were best to do.

At his elbow some one was standing, shouting to the people, but his words were swallowed up in the din. Others of the leaders already had made their escape through exits immediately back of the platform.

If Dorothy had escaped the bombs, she was somewhere in that struggling crowd, and what hope was there of his discovering her? If by some miracle he did chance to catch sight of her, it would be utterly impossible to reach her side.

There was but one way to satisfy himself of her safety—that was to slip out of the little door immediately to his rear, and place himself at the one big exit through which the crowd were now tumbling in mad, terror-stricken frenzy.

And turning from the frightful scene before him, he rushed across the stage and down a flight of narrow steps which led through the little door, to the street.

Outside, it was as if half the inhabitants of the city were there, so dense was the throng, for the news of the bomb-throwing had spread with the speed of light. The street and all the thoroughfares leading to it were jammed. It was only by sheer breadth of shoulder that Seebar was able to fight his way, inch by inch, through the mass, and force his way opposite the main exit.

The wide doors were disgorging their human contents. The people shot forth,—a literal torrent,—eyes wide-staring and unseeing, faces ghastly pale, gleaming with perspiration, hands thrust out before them, upon the solid wall of spectators, who stood gazing in silent horror at the scene.

Women, safe, shuddered and wept and fainted, and men stood, trembling, weak, and unnerved, after their terrible ordeal, scarce able to support themselves. Still the horde thundered and plunged to safety.

A line of red-coated police from time to time renewed their efforts to force back the crowd of

onlookers, but they could do no more than hold the mass from further encroaching.

And then, to all this—the police, the crowd, the confusion—Seebar became oblivious, his attention completely concentrated on the faces of the women who were being swept in the panic out to safety. Surely, Dorothy would, *must,* appear soon!

Then all at once his heart seemed to stop beating. A face—it might be hers; he could not be certain, half hidden as it was by the strands of her disheveled hair,—had flashed pale and terrified, up among the sea of other faces, for an instant, and then was gone. She had fallen, and half a dozen others had stumbled and fallen with her.

He sprang forward, but was met by that line of policemen. He struggled, but in vain, for they forced him back roughly.

Up peered another face, round and pallid, the dark hair sticking to the hot pale brow. It was the face of Bornheim!

Seebar's last hope vanished. So close behind her, it must have been she! Again he tried to break through the line, only this time to be struck back violently.

Then another woman's face came to view, chin thrust forward, eyes and nostrils distended, hair tumbling about her ears, a little stream of blood coursing down the right cheek.

Seebar's heart gave one great leap. There was no mistaking it this time—it was Dorothy Markham. He could see now that Bornheim had a firm hold upon her arm, was leading her and breaking the way, and for the first and last time, he felt a thrill of thankfulness that Bornheim was with her to protect her.

Seebar had forgotten the quarrel, forgotten that his relations with Dorothy Markham were ended; he knew only that the girl he loved with an intense passionate love stronger than life itself had been in the greatest danger of death, death in a most horrible form.

As the pale, weary face, bloodstained, emerged

like a broken flower, his heart went out to her as to a child. "Poor little girl," he thought, and his outstretched arms had closed around her. For a moment he held her close, and she in her bewilderment did not heed him. Overcome with fright and exhaustion she had let her head sink to his shoulder. She was gasping dry, panting sobs. Her arms clung to him as if for protection.

"There, there, dear," he said, heedless of his surroundings, "it's all right now. You are safe."

But she did not seem to hear him.

Presently she grew calmer, and looked up. A half-puzzled, half-wondering look came into her eyes. Then she took a step back. "Dorothy," Seebar began, "Dorothy!"

But she had turned to Bornheim.

"Oh, take me away, take me away," she begged.

Already Bornheim, with his arm about her in support, was forcing his way through a narrow lane that had been opened up for the fleeing banqueters.

For a moment or so Seebar stared after them, the old despair gnawing at his soul. Apparently she had made a choice—a choice between him and Bornheim, in favor of the latter. Then almost mechanically, he followed, without a thought as to why he did so. Perhaps it was because he could not bear thus to have her leave him, perhaps it was because he felt that from what he had observed in the café she was no longer quite safe with Bornheim.

They were a long time in getting clear of the crowd, but they were clear at last.

For a distance of three blocks Seebar followed them, and then they turned aside into one of the municipal hotels. In the rotunda they separated, taking elevators to the right and left. It was a long time, perhaps an hour, that Seebar waited, seated in the depths of a big easy-chair, well hidden behind a huge, square pillar.

Few people were entering the building, but many were hurriedly leaving it. On the faces of many of these anguish was written, and Seebar

could guess with a sympathetic pang that they had friends or relatives at the great jubilee banquet at the New Auditorium.

Through the windows he could look out into the street. A constant stream of people was hurrying by in the direction from which he had just come.

He thought of the affair of the bomb-throwing only as a single isolated outbreak. In no way did he connect it with a conspiracy primarily caused by the unsatisfactory manner in which the Socialistic principles were working themselves out.

Just as Seebar little dreamed what would be the far-reaching effects of the bomb-throwing of that night, so did the anarchists themselves apparently have no conception of the widespread results their outrage would produce. It created the upheaval of the discontented of all beliefs, that struck Socialism such a terrible blow. The anarchists, the disaffected Socialists, the Individualists, were one in the terrible insurrection in Chicago that horrified the world.

CHAPTER XX

WHAT BEFELL IN THE STUDIO

SEEBAR had sat for a long time, perhaps an hour, when the heavy-set and dignified Bornheim stepped out of one of the elevators descending on the right. In spite of the life-and-death rush and struggle in which he had so recently been engaged, he appeared as fresh, as well groomed, as complacent as ever he had. He was drawing on a pair of gloves, and a cigar was between his lips.

He crossed the rotunda halfway, paused, and then began pacing slowly back and forth.

Seebar studied him intently.

What was it that Dorothy Markham saw in this man? he wondered. Or did she see anything in him, after all? Handsome, virile, and masterful, he certainly was—characteristics that are supposed to appeal to every woman. But he was

not Dorothy's kind. Of that Seebar's intimate acquaintance with his old sweetheart absolutely assured him.

What were their present relations? Was Bornheim received merely as a friend, or as a lover? Lastly, what was Bornheim's attitude of mind toward her? Seebar would have stricken ten years from his life to have had these questions answered.

As he gazed and pondered, from the long, red-lined hallway, to the left, Dorothy herself appeared. The cloak she had worn in the café had been lost in the flight from the New Auditorium, and her gown had been badly torn. These finer garments had been replaced by much plainer and simpler ones—evidently secured at the hotel. Her hair had been rearranged, and except for a slight pallor, she had never appeared to greater advantage in Seebar's eyes.

He almost groaned aloud as she took Bornheim's arm in a manner that indicated absolute assurance of protection, and the two came down

the broad corridor, past where Seebar was seated, and out into the street.

In an instant Seebar was on his feet and after them.

Through the ever thickening throngs, the two threaded their way for several blocks. At first Seebar hung back, fearing detection, but as neither at any time turned to look back, he gained in confidence, and, drawing closer, he was presently walking directly behind them.

It was not out of mere curiosity, or through jealousy that he had taken upon himself this task of detective. Always uncertain of Bornheim, the fact that he would take Dorothy to such a place as the Lion's House, brought Seebar to believe she was no longer safe with the man. He felt fully justified in following them.

Suddenly the pair took an unexpected turn to the left and came to a dead halt at the entrance to a building; and Seebar, before he also could come to a stop, almost stumbled against them. But they did not heed him, as he slunk by.

There followed a moment's earnest conversation, and then Dorothy entered the building, which Seebar now recognized as the old Russian Exchange. Bornheim went on slowly to the corner, paused, apparently hesitated for a moment, and then came walking back briskly, and also entered the building. Seebar was but a moment behind him.

Only one elevator was running. The indicator showed that it was somewhere near the top of the building. But at last, after what seemed to Seebar an inexpressibly long time, the cage descended.

"On which floor did my friend get out?" Seebar asked carelessly of the old man in charge.

"The top," answered the man. He eyed Seebar intently, as if he would fathom his character. Then he added, "We don't run quite to the top, you know. People get out on the thirtieth floor, and walk up to the last."

"Thank you," replied Seebar.

The man began to talk further as the elevator

ascended. "Mr. Bornheim comes here often in the daytime."

"Yes?" answered Seebar.

"Miss Markham's a fine young lady." He spoke as if feeling his way.

"Indeed she is." Seebar's words were of unmistakable warmth.

"You won't mind, will you—you won't take it as an offense, now, will you, if I say that——"

The elevator had reached the top, the door was open, but Seebar stood looking into the old man's half-doubtful, half-deprecating eyes.

"If you say what?"

"Well," said the old man slowly, "I can see that you're the right sort, sir, and I can see that Miss Markham is the right sort, too. She always has a smile and a word for me. But I think she —I don't understand Mr. Bornheim's coming up this way. She told me she was in a hurry—had come up to find something—but no doubt it's all right," he added, again growing apologetic, "though no one else is up here to-night. It must

be because of that awful explosion. Can you tell me just what did happen?"

But Seebar already had found his way to the stairs indicated, and was climbing them rapidly, but quietly.

He had not thought to ask the elevator man the number of Dorothy's suite of rooms, and at the head of the stairs he paused a moment, uncertain whether to go to the right or to the left. But down the hall some distance, a solitary light showed through the glazed glass transom of the door, and with a few rapid, silent strides, Seebar was before it.

He had got beyond the point of reflecting now why he was there. If he had thought to hesitate, to chide himself for being an officious fool in thrusting himself to the fore as a protector where no protector was needed, the broad hint of the elevator man had caused all doubt to vanish. With his love of Dorothy still as strong, as unquenchable as ever, with his knowledge of Bornheim's reputation and character, he might even

now have set his suspicions down as being over-edged. But when the eyes of the old man saw danger, too, he was thankful he had put himself there.

Inside he could hear the sound of voices, and occasionally a slight exclamation, then a little laugh.

The minutes passed and still the sound of voices continued. More than once Seebar was sorely tempted to try the door, but each time better judgment prevailed and he waited. It was a slight affair, even were it locked, and if she needed help he could easily force it. There was no doubt that if aid were required she would cry aloud for it.

Seebar was all on edge. Indignation, too, was mingled with his excitement. In any event, what did Bornheim mean by compromising Dorothy in this manner? But as time went on, the muscles of his legs began to grow weary, and the first fever of his excitement had cooled down. Still alert, he waited.

Now and then the voices sunk to low murmurs, or died away, for brief intervals, altogether. Suddenly, after a longer pause than usual of this kind, there came a sort of gasping, choking cry, which was instantly smothered. Then a woman's voice rang out, "Oh, how can you?"

And then as Seebar, hearing a hand on the knob, shrank back close against the wall, the door was thrown wide open, and Bornheim and Dorothy stood to view. He had the girl's left hand clasped firmly in his right, his other arm about her waist. Evidently it was she who had opened the door, for she still clung to the knob, and Bornheim's attitude was that of one who had captured her in flight.

She was looking up at him with distressed face. "Don't," she said quite gently, "please don't, I don't love you. I'm sorry, but I don't. I can't marry you——"

And then she stopped, as if something she suddenly saw in Bornheim's eyes alarmed her.

But his hold only tightened. "I didn't say

anything about marrying," he answered. "I asked you if you loved me. What do I, what do you, want to marry for? To-night every institution of the past falls. Why, the city is rife with anarchy. Socialism only took halfway measures. To-night comes the cataclysm. Every civil institution will vanish. Man has fretted for ages under the curse of wedded life. Now to-night will begin a new era—the era of free love, —where each may claim for himself his mate for how or when he pleases. So you see I did not ask you to marry me. Come, dear, we are alone here together, all alone!"

His eyes were glowing into hers like coals of fire.

"Don't, don't touch me," she cried, "let me go," and she began to struggle, "oh, please let me go."

"You might cry yourself hoarse," was his answer. "We are alone here, absolutely alone. No one is on this floor, no one is in this building, except that decrepit old fool who runs the eleva-

tor. By God, you shall love me, whether you will or no!" And he gathered her in his arms in a crushing embrace, and forced kiss after kiss upon her lips. And then drawing back, holding her by the wrists at arms' length, he looked down into her terrified eyes and laughed.

"You beast!" she cried, and with a strong effort she jerked away one arm and threw her body against the doorpost, struggling there, while he still held her, laughing at her futile efforts.

"Oh, God, God help me," she cried.

Bornheim had one glimpse of a fierce, white face, of eyes big and black with passion, set jaws, and then, even as he slipped his hold from the girl, a fist came crashing against his shoulder, and he spun back and down.

Dazed, a bit shaken, but apparently not hurt a particle, he was on his feet.

"I'll kill you," he exclaimed, and made a motion toward the pocket of his trousers.

Seebar struck at him again, and then as he felt the man's hands come up toward his throat he

closed with him. They swayed together around the room for a moment, neither able to obtain a grip that was decisive, or to shake the other's hold.

There came a jar and a crash, and Seebar felt himself falling. Withal, he could hear, in a dim sort of way, a woman's shrill scream. Then he struck something hard and cold, and found himself on his back, with a strangely horrible pain shooting through his spine and a heavy weight on top of him.

Opening his eyes he discovered the weight to be Bornheim. He lay motionless, collecting his thoughts. The pain in his back was not so severe as it had been a moment ago. The cold air was beating around them, and as he looked straight up he could see the clear brightness of the stars through broken masses of clouds, slowly stealing along in the night. Black and gaunt, partly obscuring the view of the heavens, naked steel girders were reared above him.

Later he understood what had happened. They

had fallen against the window, and had crashed through and down upon part of the structure where the building was unfinished.

The fall had been a matter of but a foot or so, for there just above his head was the window, with its great jagged gap made by their fall, showing sharp against the light of the room, into which Seebar could see, and there Dorothy crouched, too, staring out into the semi-gloom.

Seebar wondered how much support there was to right or left. They had evidently alighted on some sort of a workman's platform. As Seebar still lay motionless, Bornheim's face pressed hard against his shoulder, and his breathing sounded heavy in his ear.

Seebar put out his right arm. From the shoulder down it fell away into space. Startled, slowly he rolled his head to one side. He gasped and his body seemed to shrink. He was lying at the brink of space itself. Thirty stories below lay the vast burst of city lights. How wide was the support that sustained them?

The position in which Bornheim was lying prevented Seebar's turning his eyes to the left, but he was able to reach out his hand. For the little distance he could stretch his fingers he found solid plank. They were lying upon a platform several feet at least in width. At most, how much more?

He turned again to the right. The lights blurred his vision, and closing his eyes, it was as if he were swirling round and round in space, while an infinite field of dark red seemed to shift and glide endlessly.

Then he looked up again at the cool stars, twinkling through the broken masses of clouds. A cold gust of wind chilled his face, and space above, and space below, and blowing winds, overwhelmed him with the ineffable terror of his position.

He strove to shift his body to get away from the abyss at his right, but Bornheim's weight pressed him down. Then for the first time he wondered what ailed the man. Why did he not

get up? Why did he remain motionless? Except for his heavy breathing he gave no sign of life whatever.

Again Seebar strove to rise and then, with a fierce strength that alarmed him, he felt the other's arms gather around his body in a strong, resistless hold. Bornheim's head was raised, too, and Seebar found himself looking into a pair of staring, unseeing eyes. The grip of the arm was not the grip of aggressive battle; the look in the eyes was not the look of hatred. The grapple, the stare, were those of the subdued animal—not the man in fighting mood.

And then Seebar understood that the man was laboring under fear—a fear as unreasoning as that of a drowning man—that made him clutch wildly, as if, by sheer strength, he would steady the support that moved under him. The terrible falling fear was upon the man.

Seebar knew vaguely there was such a thing, had heard of structural steel workers on the lofty heights of skyscraper or suspension bridge, be-

coming possessed of this appalling, unreasoning horror.

He lay still for a little, thinking what to do, Bornheim meantime slowly sinking into his former posture.

To the left the platform probably did not reach far. It is true, Seebar could not touch the edge with his fingers. But an arm's length is a very short distance. Again he rolled his head to the right, and as he looked downward he had once more the sensation of floating in air. It was a sensation that made his body shrink.

His single, his overwhelming desire in life was to get away from the edge of that abyss, coupled with anger against the man who prevented his doing so.

He braced himself at shoulders and heels, and stiffening his back and using his elbows as jacks, suddenly heaved with all his strength.

He could feel Bornheim's arms tighten around him like the coils of a serpent. The man's weight was a fearful incubus. But they had moved—

half-lifted, half-rolled by Seebar's convulsive effort, to the left.

Now for the first time Seebar could really take in the significance of the situation. It was a most narrow platform they were upon—separated from the window, from where they had fallen, by a gap of perhaps a yard—just a mere bit of a raft in the vast circumambient ocean of atmosphere.

Raising his eyes to the window again, he saw Dorothy leaning forward in alert, intent pose, with hands tightly folded. Even in his own distress he had time for a flashing thought of pity for her. She could not, of course, understand. To her the two firmly clasped in each other's arms must present a picture of physical combat. He found himself wondering at his thus imagining and analyzing her introspection. It was like a dream within a dream.

Once more the feeling of anger, replacing these thoughts, surged through him. He experienced a mad, fierce desire to tear this clinging mass of

flesh from him and hurl it down, down to the streets where the light lay like white fog.

He began to work his arms to a freer position. Gradually he got them over his head. Then his fingers felt for Bornheim's throat, and with a savage, ruthless clutch they closed upon it.

The man gagged and struggled, fighting hard for his breath. His arms fell away from around Seebar's shoulders, and he began to work his hands in a strange pushing sort of action, to shove away the thing that choked him. Then his grasp sought Seebar's wrists, but Seebar let go the throat and his fingers closed around his antagonist's wrists, instead. Bornheim was no longer on top of him. Both were now lying side by side. With a quick, adroit motion, Seebar suddenly let go, and sprang upon his feet, with only a bit of a platform, five feet wide by twice its length, to sustain him above a gulf five hundred feet deep.

As he stood, half-giddy, measuring the gap that separated him from the window and safety, he

felt himself seized around the knees with a force that well-nigh threw him. It was as mad a thing to let this man, fear-stricken, cowering, grapple with him as it would be were he drowning in the sea.

For the second time that night Seebar struck him—struck him a swinging, glancing blow that put him again on his back. Then he turned, running along the narrow steel beam to the window, where he placed his hands upon the sill. In ordinary mood he could not have done that, though his life depended upon it. But he was not in ordinary mood. He was fresh from the struggle of freeing himself from a man possessed of the terror of a child and the strength of a giant. To get away from that, for the instant, was his one thought.

Dorothy, quick-witted girl, was already fumbling at the catch. Then up shot the sash, and Seebar had lifted himself into the room, and was leaning against the wall for support, pale and trembling.

"Oh," cried Dorothy, pointing with outstretched fingers at his arm, "you are hurt!"

Her face was absolutely colorless, and she half-reeled as she pointed.

A gash, as if made by the single stroke of a huge shears, was in his left coat sleeve near the shoulder, and through this the blood was oozing into the dark cloth.

He patted it softly with his right hand, and the cloth felt wet and spongy to the touch. As he drew his hand away the palm showed a bright deep red, and as he gazed upon it wonderingly, for he felt no pain, Seebar half-sickened at the sight.

And then Dorothy did the very natural thing—the thing that many another girl would have done long ago—fainted. She fell before Seebar could reach her side, but she fell lightly, her shoulders striking the soft edge of the couch that stood against the wall, and thence she slipped quietly to the floor.

He lifted her gently, very gently, and laid her

on the sofa, with a cushion under her head. She was very pale and still, and her hand was cold to his touch. Her breathing, to his anxious eye, seemed fearfully light.

Seebar, for the moment, was nearly beside himself. What if this final shock had been too much for her? Suppose she were to die?

The perils, the events of the night were all forgotten—forgotten the great gash in his arm, from which the blood was now shaken unheeded on the green rug, as he paced back and forth in his anxiety; forgotten the wild din and uproar in the city; the battle with the man still lying out there, fear-helpless, on the bit of plank in space.

Then he thought of outside aid and sprang to the telephone. But no response came from the operator. If he had known at that moment the condition of affairs in the city, he would not have wondered why. He waited a minute, while each second seemed that length of time. Then with a gesture of despair he threw down the receiver

and rushed for the elevator shaft. He rang again and again, stamping with impotent impatience, but the single elevator that was running some time before did not respond.

He could wait no longer. If help were to be worth while it must come at once. Down the stairs he dashed, two and three steps at a time. At each landing he seemed to gain a new impetus.

When finally he did reach the street he was breathless and dizzy. Then for the first time was he aware of the tremendous upheaval in the city. The people seemed possessed by some strange excitement. They swept through the streets, all bent apparently for the same destination. From wall to wall of the street was a mass of heaving heads and shoulders.

Seebar in vain attempted to face this sea. Again and again he strove, but was flung back each time—and once he nearly went down. And then he realized that his efforts to breast the torrent were absolutely futile, and that if he would

seek a doctor for Dorothy it must be in the direction in which the mob was going.

"What does all this mean, what's the matter?" he yelled in the ear of a man who had reached down grasping his collar to save him, the last time.

"It's a revolution," the other shouted back above the thunder and roar of feet. Then he added, bringing his lips closer to Seebar's ear:

"We've had altogether too much of this damned Furst."

The next instant the shifting torrent swept the two apart.

A revolution—a revolution against Socialism! Was it possible, was it credible? Seebar's memory swung back a year to the night when he had been borne, as he was being borne to-night, by a mob down into La Salle Street. He remembered the boy—the mischievous, red-haired boy—whose high-keyed voice had sent the mob, first laughing, then more serious, into the

banking section of the city. The mob that night had been possessed by a different spirit than now. It had been light-hearted, relieved after a great political campaign, in which it had won, and in which the issues had appeared more vital than in any previous campaign in the country's history. Yet that night its good nature had turned to license and bloodshed. If the spirit of revolt had really set in—Seebar shuddered at thought of the turn this spirit might take. He knew that there was discontent, bitter, savage discontent, with the condition of things—he had heard complaints on every side during the past several months. But these complaints had not been directed against Socialism, as a practical working principle, so much as against the government officials themselves,—the men who were putting the Socialistic principles into execution. Yet he could not believe that there was a wide-spread conspiracy to overthrow the government. The bomb-throwing, he knew, was the expression of neither disaffected Socialists nor Individualists. The

flaunted flag, red with blue stripes, had been that of anarchy.

Still he was rocked and swayed with the crowd —onward, ever onward.

Through all this train of thought, another more pertinent idea was running also, like the beating of a nerve in pain. Not once was Dorothy absent from his mind. First it was in a kind of frenzied anguish, and then in an almost mad despair, that he found himself being carried farther and farther from the studio in the Russian Exchange Building.

At times his fears became positive terror. Dorothy lying alone there in the studio, thirty stories from assistance, was dying perhaps, perhaps even now was dead. Then, in another swirl of fear, Seebar thought of Bornheim. If the man should recover his nerve, if he should return to the room—he fought the thought, flung it from him as if it were one that would damn his soul eternally. Bornheim would not dare, would not dare, would not dare

—he kept repeating to himself. Like a child saying its lesson over and over by rote, he reiterated the phrase till it became blurred and meaningless.

If he could but escape from this persistent throng of madmen!

Then all at once the crowd came to a halt at an intersection of streets, leaving Seebar wedged between sidewalks, with the way open to his sight in four directions. In front, several blocks away, the white walls of the great government printing building loomed up, barring the way like an enormous citadel. To the left, to the right, to rear, the heads extended, seemingly unending, beyond vision.

What did it all mean? Was it indeed the mighty revolution that the man, shouting in Seebar's ear, had declared it to be? If so, where were the leaders, and what was the present purpose of this enormous concourse?

Even in his bewilderment, however, Seebar had thought for wonder at the apparent order-

liness of the multitude. Yet when he put a question to the men around him, it was received in stolid silence or with shakes of the head, indicating either impatience or ignorance. Did they really know what they were there for?

Suddenly a shout arose in front of the great white building—a shout that was taken up and borne back. Out through a score of windows of the government printing building shot white bundles, scattering over the heads of the crowd—and resolving themselves into a shower of newspapers. As the sheets whirled, a thousand hands reached for them, and in an instant the air grew thick with the fragments.

Seebar understood now. The people were wrecking the government printing offices. They were weary of the half-truths and fabrications that daily filled the columns of the press.

But Seebar's eye had caught that which made hope leap high in his breast. The wrecking of a government printing plant at once took on but slight significance. He no longer was a helpless

atom, big only in despair and anguish, imprisoned by a countless horde of other hostile atoms. He was a man who saw a chance to escape from what to him was a meaningless chaos.

He began to work his way toward the left, for in that direction there was a space, scarcely a foot wide, that broke the solid wall of buildings, and beyond this space Seebar remembered there ran a court—thence a short subway beneath the streets. And farther beyond that he hoped for unobstructed passage back to the studio.

Slowly he began to force his way through the mass. Now cheer after cheer was ringing out; all eyes were turned upward, and somehow drawn to follow the general gaze, in spite of his anxiety to get away and return to Dorothy, Seebar beheld the old national flag of Stars and Stripes, suppressed this year back, flying in its accustomed place on the dome of the white building. The red flag was gone.

The cheers were short-lived. They had suddenly turned to a howl of indignation. Seebar

felt the great mass quiver and then there was a brief attempt at a forward movement, followed by a recession, as those toward the front of the crowd began to surge back. He did not look to see what it was all about. His private affairs that night were more vital than the welfare of the whole nation. He no longer felt himself a part of the people of this city. That he had been a leader seemed as far away and dim as a troubled dream. He had nothing to do with aught of this rabble, either Individualist or Socialist. To get away from it, to find his way back to the studio, was his sole thought.

He had reached the curbstone, had worked his way across the sidewalk, and was slipping into the gap in the wall when the thing happened—happened with all the suddenness and all the horror of the deed in the New Auditorium.

What it was that caused Seebar to turn and look up just as he was about to plunge into the narrow gap between the buildings he never knew. Across the street at an open window, four stories

above the pavement, stood a man, balancing a ponderous weight over his head. The motion and attitude were much like that of a man lifting a heavy tray. Suddenly, as Seebar watched, he released his left hand, balancing the heavy weight for an instant on his right, and then with the movement of an athlete putting the shot, hurled the mass down and out upon the heads of the crowd.

The flash, the roar, the jar, seemed simultaneous.

Seebar felt himself lifted off his feet and thrown violently. He seemed to be a long time coming to earth. Then he felt a sudden shock, as if something had leaped up and struck him. Presently he realized that he was lying on his side, on the ground. As he strove to sit up another roar and earth-trembling followed.

A silence of a moment's duration was broken by a crying out of wild, terrified voices.

Seebar did not even look to learn more. He staggered to his feet and ran. Through the

length of the gap, across the courtyard, and then down into the subway for pedestrians he plunged, where the quiet, after the horrid roar above, was almost bewildering.

In another ten minutes he found himself again in the streets, racing hatless toward the building where he had left Dorothy.

Streams of people still were swirling in the direction from which he was fleeing. Only the streams were much thinner—no longer torrent-like and irresistible.

CHAPTER XXI

A NEW DAY

TO Seebar that long climb up thirty flights of stairs ever afterward seemed a nightmare. His anxiety for Dorothy's safety had carried him through the streets as rapidly as lung power and impeding obstacles would permit. The last square he had covered at top speed. He was badly winded when he began his climb up the stairs, and yet with every step that he took, lessening the distance between him and Dorothy, he strove to go still faster.

Had she recovered from her swoon? He upbraided himself that he had deserted her to go in search of assistance. What if for want of a little water dashed in the face, a bit more air, or some such simple restorative, she had died alone while he was off on his bootless errand? Of Bornheim he would no longer allow himself to think.

Breathless and dizzy, his heart pounding, Seebar finally staggered into the little studio. Then the sudden reaction that came to him rendered him more weak and unstrung than had even his haste and anxiety.

Dorothy was sitting up, her face in her hands, as if to shut out something from sight.

Seebar watched her for a moment. It came to him as he sank trembling into a chair, that in just such manner he had watched her in the springtime in the half-darkened library the day of the sacking of the old mansion on the Sheridan Drive.

But it was with a different feeling that he watched now. Then he had felt himself to be an intruder. Here he could boldly and rightfully assume the rôle of protector.

She must have heard him, for she was looking up at him now, as he sat quivering with the violence of his breathing.

She gave a cry of mingled surprise and joy, and stretched forth her arms. "Please, please, don't leave me," she said.

In an instant Seebar was on his knees at her side, and her arms were about his neck with her head resting on his shoulder.

Presently she looked up. "I have been so frightened," she said. "Oh, I am so glad, so very glad you have come back!" Then with a turn in the thought she continued: "I always wanted you to come back. I always had faith in you; I always believed in you, even when I acted as if I didn't. I am sure now that you were sincere in your beliefs. Forgive me for ever showing doubt."

For answer, Seebar pressed his lips first to her forehead, then to her lips. In that moment all the bitterness and pain of the many weary months past vanished.

"You warned me of Bornheim in the Lion's House. I was so puzzled at the time, because you sent him to meet me and father when we first came to the Pelion."

Seebar looked perplexed. "I don't understand," he said. "I never sent Bornheim to look

after you. That day you were evict—left your home, I telegraphed my friend Lessing to meet you——"

"It was Bornheim who met us. He said you had sent him. That is why we were so ready—father and I—to make friends with him, because we thought him a friend of yours. Don't you see, Alfred, how we always trusted in you?"

"What an unconscionable liar——" Seebar began. Then he broke off abruptly. "Have you seen anything more of Bornheim?"

Dorothy shook her head. Seebar rose and stepped to the window and looked out upon the platform, where he had struggled for life against his adversary's terror.

It was bare.

Seebar drew in a deep breath. "I'm glad he's safe," he thought.

There was a movement behind him, and Dorothy was at his side.

"He has escaped?" she asked almost in a whisper.

"Yes," responded Seebar in the same low tone in which she had spoken.

"I am glad," she answered, "we'll feel better so."

But Bornheim had not escaped, as Seebar learned many hours later. A shapeless mass, once a human being, was found, in the morning, on the hard concrete courtyard, directly beneath the platform.

Totally ignorant of this, however, at the time, silently they looked out upon the city. How could they know what dreadful things were going on there that night? The tumult seemed to have died away. The myriad lights cast their glare heavenward as they had always done.

"What is that?" Dorothy suddenly asked, clutching Seebar's arm like a frightened child.

From a distance there had been borne to their ears a strange roar, followed by a slight jar of the building. Then a second boom followed, and again the floor shook slightly beneath them, as if an earthquake were rumbling by.

And then a strange thing happened—strange to the inhabitants of that twentieth century city, who had not known the like before; as though a wave of darkness had passed over the city all the lights went out.

The lights in the room also went out with them, and Dorothy crept still closer to Seebar. The primitive fear of darkness, of the strange and the unknown, was upon them.

Away to the south the sky was suddenly shot with red light. To right and left of this presently other red lights began to flicker and dance across the darkness.

"They are firing the city," said Seebar.

Fascinated, they watched the flames.

Then the strange booming sounds recommenced.

"We must get to your father," Seebar exclaimed suddenly.

"Oh, Alfred, how could I forget him! We must get to him at once. Come! Come!"

And hand in hand they threaded their way in

the dark through the outer room of the studio, to the stairs in the hall, and descended to the street.

Outside it was as twilight. The fog had long since lifted. The air was filled with noises. The whole city hummed with a mysterious, unaccountable activity, that was as a portent of further evil and disaster. Few persons were in the immediate neighborhood, but such as they saw were hastening in the direction of the lights leaping up against the sky.

Silently Dorothy and Seebar hurried on. Presently they had turned to the left, and ahead they could see an endless throng passing. Still without exchange of speech, they hastened, and a few moments more brought them to the Pelion. Some feeble lights, generated by a small motor on the premises, rescued the place from absolute darkness.

Below it was quiet enough, but in the upper corridors women were rushing about, sobbing hysterically, children were crying, and men were

gathered in groups at the windows, and talking in eager, excited tones.

As Seebar and Dorothy turned into the Markham apartment the voice of the ex-steel magnate greeted them.

"Is that you, Dorothy? I am glad you are back. I feel far from well, and the noises outside are very upsetting. Whom have you with you?"

"Alfred, father."

There were no lights in the room and they stood together by the bedside in the darkness. Dimly against the white of the pillow, and beneath the counterpane, they could make out the form of Mr. Markham. A heavy roar, not three blocks distant, sounded at that moment, and a burst of light flashed for an instant. The empty eye-sockets, so hideous, of the man lying there, were revealed under the raised lids.

"What does all this mean?" went on the voice from the bed. "Is it a revolt?"

"I think it is a revolution," answered Seebar

gloomily, "whether of Socialists or anarchists I cannot tell, though the latter, I know, started the trouble."

Aye, it was a revolution—one of the most terrible in the history of the world. What, after all, were the horrors and atrocities of the uprising of 1793? France was still medieval. The vast bulk of her population were as ignorant and bigoted as though they lived in the Dark Ages. The atrocities of the religious wars following the Protestant Reformation, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, even the rising of the Commune in 1871—what were these? The madness of ignorance and fanaticism.

Who could fancy, with the death penalty abolished, men surrounded with all the luxuries the greatest material civilization the world had ever seen, with the masses educated, enlightened, that bombs could be thrown into crowds of helpless human beings, among women and children? Who could have believed that Individualists as well as Socialists, Socialists as well as

anarchists, could have taken part in the fury, the butcheries, the rapine, that followed hard upon the first outbreaks of that terrible third of November, 1953?

And yet that night men were as demons. Every man's hand was raised against his fellow. Women were outraged and murdered, children despatched with fiendish ingenuity. It was as if the city had been taken by Huns of the fifth century.

Once, underneath the window of the room in which Mr. Markham lay, there was a loud outcry, and Seebar could discern three men struggling there in the dim light. One fell with a loud groan, and then the remaining two attacked each other like madmen.

Seebar turned away. His faculties were awhirl. What did it all mean? What sort of a Frankenstein was this Socialism to have thus created so terrible a monster?

He heard Mr. Markham's voice calling to him as out of a dream. "Mr. Seebar, I don't quite

understand, but I find you with my daughter. It is of her own free will, I trust?"

"Oh, father," interposed Dorothy. "He more than saved my life to-night. We have been so very unjust to Alfred, and I love him so—I do indeed."

And she was on her knees at the bedside, her fingers resting lightly on her father's face.

"Mr. Markham," said Seebar, "I find you were right. I have made a mistake. I thought Socialism could do the impossible. I believed it would revolutionize the world spiritually as well as materially. I believe now that all good in government and economics, as in all other things in life, must come from within ourselves. I have no remorse for the part I have taken in the movement which led to the Great Change—for my intentions were serious and honest—I have only regret. Henceforth I shall devote myself to reclaiming this country from the curse of Socialism, to bringing it back to its former constitutional government."

The old man's hand reached out till he had found Seebar's, and placing it firmly on his daughter's hand, held it there.

A faint light began to show through the east window.

"See," said Dorothy softly, "it is morning."

THE END

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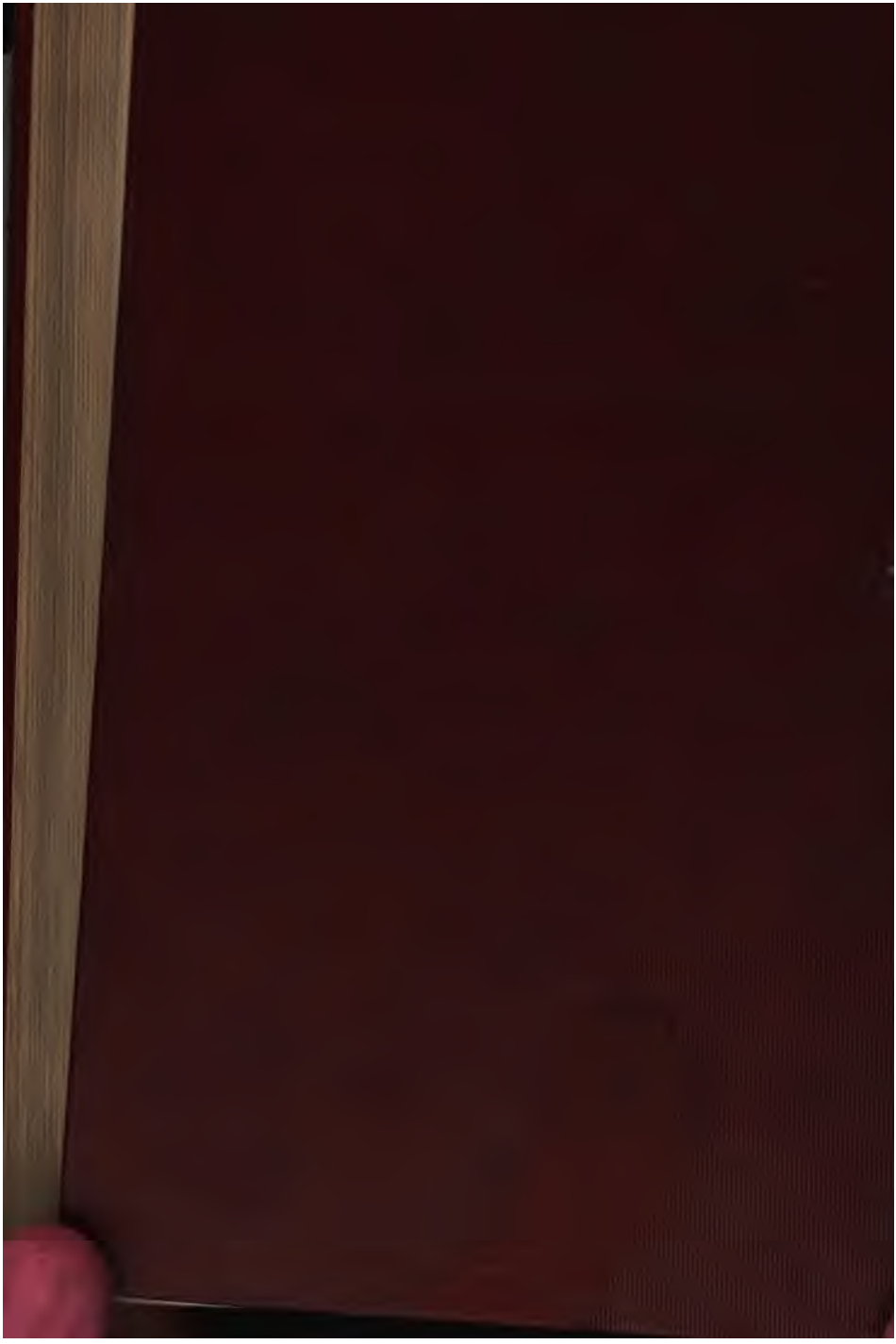
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